

Elkesley Primary and Nursery School



Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy **(Policy Number 30)**

Compiled by	Mr C Marsh	September 2023
Agreed by	Staff	
Approved by	Governors	
Date of Review	September 2026	

Definition of Mental Health and Wellbeing

“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)

Mental Health and Wellbeing is not however, just the absence of mental health problems. In order for the community to have positive mental health and wellbeing, we want all pupils and stakeholders to:

- Feel confident in all that they do
- Be able to express emotions appropriately
- Make and maintain positive relationships with others
- Cope with the stresses of everyday life
- Know how to manage stresses and deal appropriately with change
- Enjoy every day that they come to school.

Policy Statement

At Elkesley Primary and Nursery School, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our school community (children, staff, parents, carers and stakeholders). We recognise how important mental health and wellbeing is in our lives, and that it is equally as important as physical health.

Mental health is a critical part of a child’s wellbeing, and we recognise that poor mental health can adversely affect a child’s learning and progress. Our first school values is ‘happy’ and focusses around the importance of doing things which make you happy and practicing promoting positive mental health. This is at the root of all we do in school, and we positively to promote good mental health and wellbeing for all of our community. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. By making our school mentally healthy, we strive to ensure a nurturing, welcoming and supportive environment, where all children can build on their potential, no matter their life experiences. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for our pupils: those who are affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health. We want to ensure we help the children deal with their own mental health, support others who may be suffering from poor mental health, and understand what they can do in order to have a positive mind-set.

Aims

Our policy aims to set out 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. There may be links to our Safeguarding, Anti-Bullying, Equalities and Behavior Policies.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all members of our school community across the whole school
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Outline how we prevent mental health problems
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Signpost our community to seeking further advice and support
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

Lead Members of Staff

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health across the school. Within this, all staff should understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems. Looking out for such signs will allow for staff to have early intervention and provide them with the support they need.

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Chris Marsh – Headteacher, Mental Health Lead and Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Kirsty Griffiths – SENDco and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Donna MacIntyre – ELSA

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the mental health lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral – see child protection policy.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Kirsty Griffiths, SENDco, or any of the Senior Leadership Team, dependant on the nature of the referral. Guidance about referring to CAMHS can be found here: <https://www.nottinghamshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/camhs-young-people>

Teaching about Mental Health

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 PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

We believe that the school has a key role in promoting children's positive mental health and providing them with strategies to prevent a decline in individual mental health throughout their school life. Additional activities include:

Whole school activities

- Themed weeks/days linked to mental health awareness
- Assemblies led by pupils and staff
- Play Leaders– a group of Key Stage 2 pupils selected at the start of each academic year who are on 'duty' at break and lunch times to support with any issues
- Leaflets for parents, carers and staff across school
- Displays around school about themed days on mental health and self-regulation (Zones of regulation)

Targeted Support

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- Circle time approaches or 'circle of friends' activities.
- Managing feelings resources e.g. 'worry monsters'
- Zones of Regulation resources and a
- Restorative Practices – See Behavior Policy
- Individual Regulation plans
- ELSA support.
- Lego Therapy

ELSA

ELSAs (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) are trained to plan and deliver timely programmes of support to pupils in their school who are experiencing temporary or longer term emotional needs. The majority of ELSA work is delivered on an individual basis, but sometimes small group work will be appropriate, especially in the areas of social and friendship skills. The priorities for an individual pupil will be identified in discussion with other staff in the school. Each session has its own objective, either something the ELSA wants to achieve or something for the pupil to achieve, that builds towards the longer term aims.

Children are usually referred for ELSA support by their Class Teacher, Senior Leaders or the SENDCo. Every half term, referrals are reviewed to identify and prioritise which children require a weekly programme for the next 6-8 weeks. With the programme aims in mind, we then plan support sessions to facilitate the pupil in developing new skills and coping strategies that allow them to manage social and emotional demands more effectively.

It needs to be appreciated that change cannot necessarily be achieved rapidly and is dependent upon the context and complexity of the presenting issues. For children with complex or long-term needs, it is unrealistic to expect ELSA intervention to resolve all their difficulties, however support will be designed to target specific aspects of a child's need. Training and development of ELSAs is an ongoing process and wisdom is required to recognise when issues are beyond the level of expertise that could reasonably be expected of an ELSA.

In ELSA we aim to provide support for a wide range of emotional needs:

- Recognising emotions
- Self-esteem
- Social skills
- Friendship skills
- Anger management
- Loss and bereavement

Zones Of Regulation

The Zones of Regulation® is a framework for teaching children strategies for emotional and sensory self-management. The zones help children identify how they are feeling in the moment according to their emotions and level of alertness, as well as guide them to strategies to support regulation.

We want to teach all of our children good coping and regulation strategies so they can help themselves when they experience anxiety and stress. By teaching them how to cope with these feelings might make them better at tackling learning challenges and build better resilience so they don't give up so easily when faced with difficulty. Zones are introduced and taught through discrete teaching lessons and through our PSHE curriculum.

There are four colors or 'Zones' blue, green, yellow and red:

- Blue Zone: low level of arousal; not ready to learn; feels sad, sick, tired, bored, moving slowly.
- Green Zone: calm state of alertness; optimal level to learn; feels happy, calm, feeling okay, focused.
- Yellow Zone: heightened state of alertness; elevated emotions; has some control; feels frustrated, worried, silly/wiggly, excited, loss of some control.
- Red Zone: heightened state of alertness and intense emotions; not an optimal level for learning; out of control; feels mad/angry, terrified, yelling/hitting, elated, out of control.

We aim to help children to:

- Recognise when they are in the different Zones and learn how to change or stay in the Zone they are in.
- Increase their emotional vocabulary so they can explain how they are feeling.
- Recognise when other people are in different Zones, thus developing better empathy.
- Develop an insight into what might make them move into the different Zones.
- Understand that emotions, sensory experiences such as lack of sleep or hunger and their environment might influence which Zone they are in.
- Develop problem-solving skills and resilience
- Identify a range of calming and alerting strategies that support them (known as their personal 'toolkit'.)

Early Identification and Warning Signs

All staff will be vigilant in identifying a range of possible difficulties that may be contributing to a pupil's poor mental health, including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstance
- Recent bereavement

School staff may also 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 the designated safeguarding lead. Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- \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. If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. Staff should listen, rather than advice and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded. The record will be uploaded onto My Concern if it related to a pupil, or store appropriately in staff file if relating to a member of staff.

This information should be shared with the mental health lead, who will provide store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps, and whether external support is required.

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 or a member of staff on then we should discuss with the person:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

It is important that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgemental to pupils and adults who choose to make a disclosure to themselves or a friend. Staff make it clear to the children that the concern will need to be passed to the Mental Health Lead or DSL, and recorded, in order to provide the appropriate support to the pupil or adult in question.

Parents must always be informed if a pupil is at risk of harm or unable to keep themselves safe. Pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the pupil should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents for them or with them. If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, and any of the DSLs must be informed immediately.

Assessment, intervention and support

All concerns are reported to the Mental Health Lead and recorded. An assessment will then take place by the Mental Health Lead (and DSL/SLT if appropriate) to ensure that the concern is addressed as quickly as possible, and that the appropriate support is given. This may be from within school, or from an external specialist service. We believe early intervention is key, and we aim to deal with any concerns as quickly as possible, and

Working with Parents and Carers

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 (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face?
- Where should the meeting happen?
- Who should be present? What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this and give the parent time to reflect. We should always highlight further sources of information.

When a concern has been raised, teachers or the Mental Health Lead and SENDCO will:

Contact parents to discuss the outcome of any assessment (Although there may be cases, parents and carers cannot be involved due to child protection issues.)

- Discuss any relevant referrals to external agencies.
- Signpost parents to further information or provide resources to take away.
- Create a chronology of actions and events.
- Agree mental health care and protection plan where appropriate including clear next steps.
- Discuss how parents can support their child through strategies or signposts to parenting support groups.

Working with specialist services

As part of our targeted provision, the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing. Children may be referred to one of the following services for additional support:⁷

- Behaviour support through the Bassetlaw Behaviour Partnership
- Educational Psychology Services
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Early Help Service
- Children's and Family Services
- Counselling Service

Training

All staff receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their annual child protection training, in order to enable them to keep pupils and staff safe.

The Mental Health lead has obtained an Intermediate Certificate in the Role of the Senior Mental Health Lead for Primary Schools.

Further training is accessed throughout the year.