

# Hollyfast Primary School



## Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

**Updated: January 2023**

**Review date: January 2026**



## 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 Organisation)*

## Scope

This policy should be read in conjunction with our SEND policy in cases where pupils mental health needs overlap with these. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for Behaviour and Anti-bullying, and RSE and safeguarding policies. It sits alongside child protection procedures.

## Our Aims

At Hollyfast Primary we aim to promote positive mental health for every child, member of staff, parents and governors. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils, staff and families affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

## Identifying, referring and supporting children with mental health needs

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses seven aspects:

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.
2. Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.
3. Helping children to be resilient learners.
4. Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
5. Early identification of children who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services.
6. Effectively working with parents and carers.
7. Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding around mental health and wellbeing.

Early intervention to identify needs and provide effective support is crucial. This policy explains the school role in supporting and promoting mental health and wellbeing and can be summarised as:

<b>Prevention</b>
Creating a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely, improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school population, and equipping pupils to be resilient so that they can manage the normal stress of life effectively. This will include teaching pupils about mental wellbeing through the curriculum and reinforcing this teaching through school activities and ethos.
<b>Identification</b>
Recognising emerging issues as early and accurately as possible.
<b>Early support</b>
Helping pupils to access evidence based early support and interventions.
<b>Access to specialist support</b>
Working effectively with external agencies to provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment.

<b>Lead Members of Staff</b>
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Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

Mr Gary Watson – Head Teacher, Designated Child Protection / Safeguarding Officer (DSL)

Mrs Lynn Solloway – Assistant Head Teacher, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead & Mr Alex Reeves, deputy Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead

Mrs Dionne Alford – SENDCO

Mr Cleland – PSHE/RSE Lead

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 to the Designated Safeguarding Lead - the head teacher. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS, MHST or other is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Mrs Dionne Alford, SENDCO.

## Individual Care Plans

Individual care plans will be drawn up for pupils for whom concerns have been identified or who has received a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements
- 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 Relationships and Health Education (RHE) curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are 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 follow the DfE Relationships, Sex Education and Health Education guidance , DfE Mental Health and Behaviours in School and the Gov.UK Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. The school uses 'Jigsaw' – a whole school approach to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

## Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support.

### **CCC Occupational Health link:**

[https://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/379/occupational\\_health\\_safety\\_and\\_wellbeing\\_service](https://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/379/occupational_health_safety_and_wellbeing_service)

Occupational Health, Safety & Wellbeing Service

Thomas Yeoman House

Coventry Canal Basin

Leicester Row

Coventry

CV1 4LY Telephone: 024 7683 3285 Email: [ohsw@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:ohsw@coventry.gov.uk)

**Hollyfast Primary School has a Service Level Agreement with Occupational Health, Safety & Wellbeing giving school employees access to the services including counselling/health support if suffering from medical conditions (RDI form)/phased return after long-term absence and other services**

### **Warning Signs**

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is struggling with their mental health or emotional wellbeing. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with Mr Gary Watson (Head teacher), Mrs Lynn Solloway (Assistant Head teacher) or Mrs Dionne Alford (SENDCO)

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 by children and confidentiality**

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgemental to children who disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of our children is paramount and staff listen rather than advise. Staff make it clear to children that the concern will be shared with the Mental Health Lead or the Safeguarding Lead and recorded, in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil. All disclosures are recorded and held on the pupil's confidential file, including date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps.

### **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 (on a case by case basis):

- 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?

It can be shocking, upsetting for parents to learn their child is struggling with an aspect of their mental health and wellbeing, and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

In order to support parents we will:

- Identify and recommend sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website
- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g. through parent forums.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their child.
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in

### Peers

When a pupil is suffering with their mental health, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but can find this difficult or challenging. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. 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**

At Hollyfast we take the mental health and wellbeing of all our staff very seriously and it remains high priority in school. A range of processes are in place to support the wellbeing of staff, being mindful of workload and promoting a positive work-life balance.

When a member of staff is suffering with their mental health or wellbeing, it can be a difficult time for them and their family. Support will be provided by school on a case-by-case basis. Initial support may include: additional release time for workload, 1:1 supervision, sharing of places to seek support and advice.

### **Training**

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our appraisal process and additional Professional Learning 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 Professional Learning are collected from staff through staff questionnaires and pupil progress meetings and discussions.