



# **BIRCHINGTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING POLICY**

### **LEARNING AND GROWING; SAFE IN GOD'S LOVE**

#### **Policy Statement**

At Birchington CE Primary School, we are committed to supporting the positive mental health and wellbeing of our whole school community (children, staff, volunteers, governors, parents and carers). To us, this is an integral part of being a caring Christian school and is an integral part of our Christian vision and school values. We aim to be a place where we care for each other and have a supportive and nurturing ethos. Our approach is to be respectful and kind; where each unique individual is valued and their contribution celebrated.

We endeavor to help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health ensuring our pupils learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, how they can address negative emotions and where they can go if they need help. At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and there may be a time when we need additional support. We take the view that positive mental health is important for everyone and we all have a role to play in this.

#### **Teaching about Mental Health**

At Birchington we take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health, aiming to help children become more resilient, happy and successful. We aim to work in a pro-active way to avoid problems arising and provide support as swiftly as possible so issues do not escalate.

We do this by:

- ✓ Creating and applying consistent ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and wellbeing
- ✓ Identifying children who have emotional needs and/or mental health challenges and planning and delivering support that meets their need. This includes them working with our Pastoral Team, school counsellors and/or specialist services. This is completed in partnership with parents and carers
- ✓ Adhering to a positive, restorative approach to behaviour management
- ✓ Helping children to form and maintain positive relationships
- ✓ Assisting children to feel comfortable about sharing any concerns or worries and providing quiet, comfortable areas where this can take place
- ✓ Teaching children useful skills and an awareness of mental health so that they understand emotions and the steps to take to feel better
- ✓ Promoting self-esteem and ensuring children understand their importance in the world and the positive difference they can make to themselves and others
- ✓ Helping children to have 'growth mind set', be resilient learners and positively manage mistakes and setbacks
- ✓ Supporting and training staff to develop their own skills and personal resilience
- ✓ Developing an open culture where it is normal to talk about mental health
- ✓ Enabling children to identify when they need support and understand that it is OK to ask for help

We promote a mentally healthy environment through: -

- ✓ Promoting our Christian Vision and School Values
- ✓ Encouraging a sense of family and belonging
- ✓ Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making
- ✓ Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
- ✓ Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- ✓ Providing opportunities within the school day and areas around the school for reflection, stillness and calm
- ✓ Enabling access to appropriate support
- ✓ Mental Health awareness and RSHE for all year groups
- ✓ 'Good to be Me!' learning
- ✓ Anti-Bullying Week
- ✓ Aspiration Week
- ✓ Access to information around the school and on our school website
- ✓ Moments of mindfulness and reflection built into every school day

We pursue our aims through:

- ✓ Whole school approaches
- ✓ Support for pupils going through difficulties including bereavement and family break up
- ✓ Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties, extreme anxiety, attachment disorder and abuse
- ✓ Nurture, young carers, self-esteem and social skills groups
- ✓ 1:1 wellbeing time
- ✓ Play therapy, drawing and talking therapy and sand tray exercises
- ✓ Emotional First Aid
- ✓ Counselling
- ✓ Zones of Regulation

### **Staff Roles and Responsibilities, Including those with Specific Responsibility**

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

### **Key staff supporting Mental Health at Birchington CE Primary**

While the Headteacher maintains overall responsibility for the wellbeing of all pupils and staff, she has delegated specific responsibilities to other staff who hold key roles across the school.

- Pastoral Manager, Mental Health & Wellbeing Lead – Mrs K Downs Inclusion Leader
- Pastoral Leader & FLO – Sarah Cooper
- Named Mental Health Governor – Ms L Bant

Our Mental Health Lead:

- Promotes the importance of mental health and wellbeing
- Trains staff and co-ordinates whole school activities to promote positive mental health, wellbeing and mindfulness
- Facilitates our staff Wellbeing Group
- Creates and analyses staff and pupil wellbeing surveys
- Works with the Headteacher and HBHM Hub Driver re: teaching about mental health
- Organises Mental Health & Wellbeing Week
- Takes a key part in the organisation of 'Aspiration Week'
- Ensures staff supervision takes place and staff and pupils have access to counselling
- Provides advice and support to staff
- Provides advice and support for parents/carers and families

- Ensures displays around the school promote wellbeing and positive approaches
- Promotes 6 Ways to Wellbeing
- Ensures mental health and wellbeing support and information is on our school website
- Ensures information and useful links are shared with staff, parents and carers
- Liaise with mental health services and make individual referrals
- Is a role model, regarding mental health

### **Teaching about Mental Health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our RSHE curriculum.

At times, the specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of an individual cohort. Staff will ensure that they teach and approach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in an age appropriate, safe and sensitive manner.

### **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
- Zones of Regulation
- Targeted use of specific resources.
- Managing feelings resources e.g. 'worry boxes', 'worry eaters' and bereavement bears
- Managing emotions resources
- Salus Groups
- 1:1 Wellbeing and counselling support
- Therapeutic activities including art, Lego, relaxation and mindfulness techniques

The school will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate including:

- Emotional scoring
- The Boxall Profile

### **Signposting**

We will ensure that pupils, staff, volunteers, parents and carers are aware of the support available within our school and how to access further assistance.

### **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 and fellow adult's poor mental health, including: -

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

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil/adult is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these should communicate their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs L Wilson, (Headteacher) or one of the Deputy Safeguarding Leads, Mr J Forwood, (Deputy Headteacher), Mrs K Downs, (Inclusion Leader & Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead) or Sarah Cooper (FLO).

Possible warning signs may 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

### **Assessment, Interventions and Support**

After concerns are reported to the DSLs/Deputy DSL the pupil's/adult's individual needs will be assessed and addressed after discussion amongst this group. They will then ensure the individual receives the support they need as swiftly as possible, either from within the school or from an external specialist service.

### **Working with Parents and Carers**

Parents or carers can approach their child/children's class teacher, Sarah Cooper (FLO) or a Senior Leader if they have mental health concerns about their child. Information will be passed on/shared amongst the DSLs for assessment and action.

To support parents and carers we will: -

- Provide information online on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes
- Share ideas about how parents and carers can support the positive mental health of their own child/children
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents and carers via our school website, [www.birchington-primary.com](http://www.birchington-primary.com)
- Keep parents and carers informed about the mental health topics taught in RSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring these at home
- Organise meetings and presentations regarding mental health and wellbeing, anxiety and resilience

When a concern has been raised, depending on the issue, the class teacher, the Inclusion Leader, FLO or Senior Leader will: -

- Contact parents/carers to discuss the outcome of any assessment (although there may be cases when they cannot be involved due to Child Protection issues)
- Discuss any relevant referrals to external agencies
- Signpost parents/carers to further information, provide resources to take away or online support
- If necessary, create a chronology of actions and events
- Agree mental health care and a plan where appropriate, including clear next steps
- Discuss how parents/carers can support their child through strategies and/or signposts to parenting support groups/website information

### **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.

- CAYPMHS (Child and Young Persons Mental Health Services)

- Behaviour support through Little Oaks referral unit
- Educational Psychology Services
- School Nursing Service
- Children's and Family Services
- Therapists
- Homestart
- Early Help
- Counselling Services

### **Training**

Staff will receive training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular Child Protection training and professional development opportunities in order to enable them to keep pupils' safe and emotionally healthy.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our Performance Appraisal process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more pupils.

### **Links to other Policies**

This policy links to our Child Protection Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, SEND Offer, Staff Wellbeing Guidance and our Behaviour Policy.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy will be published on the school website – hard copies are available from the school office on request. This policy will be reviewed every year.

**LW - Headteacher & KD - MH & Wellbeing Lead: January 2025  
To be reviewed: January 2026**