



Highfields Primary Academy Policy on Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being

Adopted: March 2026

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Policy Statement

At Highfields Primary Academy, we are committed to supporting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of our pupils and staff. We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued. At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

At our school we:

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
- help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- help children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they are valued
- encourage children to be confident and develop a positive, growth mindset
- help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks
- are committed to staff well-being so that all adults feel cared for, valued, listened to and are professionally equipped to do their job to the highest standard

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of 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 for our pupils to reflect on their feelings and actions
- access to appropriate support that meets their needs.

We pursue our aims through:

- universal, whole school approaches
- support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement.
- specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties including attachment disorder.

Scope

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions policy and our SEND and Information Report policy in cases where mental health needs overlap these. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for Behaviour, Anti-bullying and PSHE (Relationship and Sex Education Policy). It should also sit alongside child protection procedures.

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Mark Wilkes - Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher
- Jennie Greatrex – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead / Senior Mental Health Lead /SENco
- Laura Setterfield - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Narinder Tamber – PSHE Lead
- Lisa Drover - Emotional Literacy Teaching Assistant (ELSA)
- Natalie Treen – Nurture Group Lead

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or emotional wellbeing of a pupil, in the first instance they should speak to the Senior Mental Health Lead or Designated Safeguarding Lead. If there is a concern that the student is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed. If the child presents a high risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

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 developmental PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching but we will also use the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

[Mental health and emotional wellbeing teacher guidance \(pshe-association.org.uk\)](https://www.pshe-association.org.uk)

Targeted Support

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

- weekly circle time sessions
- managing feelings and emotions resources e.g. 'worry worms', feeling thermometers/charts/keyrings, the 'Incredible 5 point scale', calming star and calming down boxes
- weekly Nurture Group sessions
- ELSA support groups
- bereavement support
- regular 1:1 'Checking in' discussions

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

- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire
- The Boxall Profile
- Emotional literacy scales
- House of Worries chart

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 (parent and staffroom noticeboards and display boards for pupils) and through our communication channels (weekly bulletin and school website), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure students understand:

- What help is available.
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it.
- Why should they access it.
- What is likely to happen next.

Identifying Needs and Warning Signs

Termly progress meetings will provide staff with the opportunity to identify and discuss pupils of concern with members of the Senior Leadership Team (which includes the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the SENco and Senior Mental Health Lead).

Staff will be asked to consider identifying a range of possible difficulties including:

- attendance
- punctuality
- relationships
- approach to learning
- physical indicators
- negative behaviour patterns
- family circumstances
- recent bereavement
- health indicators

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 or the Senior Mental Health Lead as appropriate.

Possible warning signs include:

- changes in eating / sleeping habits / personal hygiene
- becoming socially withdrawn
- changes in activity and mood
- talking or joking 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

Working with Parents and Carers

In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional well-being on our school website and in our weekly bulletins.
- Share information in relation to how parents can access sources of further support.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this if they have concerns about their child.
- Make our mental health and emotional well-being 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 PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

Working with Other Agencies and Partners

As part of our targeted provision, the school will work with other agencies to support children's mental health and emotional wellbeing including:

- The school nurse
- Educational psychology services
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Therapists

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 in order to enable them to keep students safe.

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 to developing situations with one or more pupils.