

*'...those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and
not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.' Isaiah 40:31*



connect | nurture | aspire | learn | excel | hope

Reculver Church of England Primary School

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Date adopted by Local Governing Body: 27th September 2019

Date of next Review: September 2022

Our values, interwoven through all aspects of school life, spring from a faith in Jesus, the person and His stories. Following His example, everyone is loved and encouraged as an individual in an inclusive, stimulating environment, empowering us all to become compassionate citizens and resilient lifelong learners who reach their potential.

We show love and compassion for others by truly helping them, and not merely talking about it.”

1 John 3:18



School Background:

Reculver CE Primary School is openly inclusive, welcoming all children from the whole community to a caring and happy environment where they can achieve to the very best of their abilities. At Reculver we believe that all children are unique and we encourage them to develop their strengths and creativity as individuals. We emphasise the development of the whole-learner physically, intellectually, emotionally and ethically.

Definition of Mental Health and Wellbeing:

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing:

"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".

Objectives

The core intentions of the policy are:

- To promote positive mental health.
- To prevent mental health problems.
- To identify and support children with mental health needs.
- To train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent or address mental health problems
- To provide key information about some common mental health problems.
- To sign post parents, staff and children for further advice and support.

A whole school approach to promoting positive mental health

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 issues. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues.

The role of the governing body

- To approve policy and ensure its implementation, to be reviewed in three years.

The role of the Director of Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Leads and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates.
- Is the first point of contact with mental health services, and makes individual referrals to them.

The role of the head teacher

- To monitor progress and liaise with external agencies.
- To keep the governing body fully informed.

Staff roles and responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to 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 and ensure that children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as: physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They should also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

Our Director of Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Leads and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Leads on PSHCE teaching about mental health.
- Provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates.
- Is the first point of contact with mental health services, and makes individual referrals to them.

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the School environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to children with mental health needs and their families. Sources of relevant support include:

- Our own Senior Leadership Team
- Our own Inclusion Leadership Team
- Our Safeguarding/Child Protection Lead
- Our Phase Leaders
- School support staff employed to manage mental health needs of particular children
- Our Inclusion Manager who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including children whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.
- The specialist teaching service advisory teacher for SEMH

Warning Signs

School staff may 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 Director of Mental Health & Wellbeing or the Head teacher and Inclusion Lead.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or 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

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

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 advise and first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'.

All disclosures should be recorded on MyConcern and held on the pupil's confidential file.

This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the Director of Mental Health & Wellbeing who will offer support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regard to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on, then we should discuss with the pupil:

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

Information should never be shared about a pupil without first telling them. Where possible the pupil's consent should be received though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent. Every pupil must be reminded information will need to be shared if there is a safeguarding concern.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Director of Mental Health or a DSL. This helps to safeguard personal emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence; and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. (We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with... does the child need to know that the adult is seeking support for their own personal wellbeing?). If a child gives reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the Lead DSL (or Deputy DSL) must be informed immediately.

Involving parents and carers

Promoting mental health

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting children who do have mental health needs.

On first entry to the School, our parent's meeting includes a discussion on the importance of positive mental health for learning. We ask parents to inform us of any mental health needs their child has and any issues that they think might have an impact on their child's mental health and wellbeing, based on a list of risk factors pertaining to the child or family. It is very helpful if parents and carers can share information with the School so that we can better support their child from the outset. All information will be treated in confidence.

To support parents and carers:

- We organise a range of activities such as workshops on protective and risk factors, wellbeing coffee mornings and parental workshops.
- We provide information and websites on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes and have produced leaflets for parents on mental health and resilience, which can be accessed on the School website. The information includes who parents can talk to if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child and where parents can access support for themselves.
- We include the mental health topics that are taught in the PSHCE curriculum section, on the School website
- When children start school, all parents and carers are given our mental health and resilience leaflet that includes information on how parents can support their child's mental health and where to go for help and support.

Supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs

We are aware that parents and carers react in different ways to knowing their child has a mental health problem and we will be sensitive and supportive. We also aim to reassure by explaining that mental health problems are common, that the school has experience of working with similar issues and that help and advice are available.

When a concern has been raised, the School will:

- Contact parents and carers and meet with them (*In almost all cases, parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as where child protection issues are identified.*)
- Offer information to take away and places to seek further information
- Be available for follow up calls.
- Make a record of the meeting.
- Agree a mental health Individual Care Plan including clear next steps.
- Discuss how the parents and carers can support their child.

- Keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions provided.

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger and children may choose to tell their parents and carers themselves. We give children the option of informing their parents

Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. 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, consideration on a case by case basis should be made as to which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with 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 or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend may need 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

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their annual safeguarding training to enable them to keep pupils safe.

Staff will be regularly signposted to all relevant online Mental Health training and a record of training will be held by the CPD lead.

Training opportunities for staff that require more in depth knowledge will be considered as part of the performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, twilight training sessions will be hosted for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health. Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the CPD Lead, who may also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Where to get information and support

For support on specific mental health needs

Anxiety UK www.anxietyuk.org.uk OCD UK www.ocduk.org

Depression Alliance www.depressionalliance.org

Eating Disorders www.b-eat.co.uk and www.inourhands.com

National Self-Harm Network www.nshn.co.uk

www.selfharm.co.uk

Suicidal thoughts Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org

For general information and support

www.youngminds.org.uk champions young people's mental health and wellbeing

www.mind.org.uk advice and support on mental health problems

www.minded.org.uk (e-learning)

www.time-to-change.org.uk tackles the stigma of mental health

www.rethink.org challenges attitudes towards mental health