

THE STOKE POGES SCHOOL

Children's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Governors Committee Responsible for the Policy	Teaching and Learning Committee
Date Approved	March 2022
Recommended Review Period	Biannual
Date of Next Review	March 2024
Person Responsible for the Policy	Gerard Geraghty

1.0 Policy statement

At The Stoke Poges School, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all students, their families and members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows students' voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

2.0 Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining The Stoke Poges School's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

3.0 Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and students.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in students.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to students with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SLT that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff and student welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

4.0 Key staff members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of students, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

Role	Named staff member
DSL/ Designated Mental Health Lead	Headteacher, Ms Astley
Deputy DSL/ PSHE Coordinator	Deputy Headteacher, Mrs Benians
SENDCo/ Designated Mental Health Lead	Mr Gerard Geraghty

Emotional Literacy Support Assistant	Mrs Clare Shearer
Medical Leads	Mrs Lea Fetherston Mrs Jenny Lea
Governor for Wellbeing	Mrs Carole Powell
Governor for SEND	Revd Natasha Brady

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of student, in the first instance they should speak to SENDCo Mr Gerard Geraghty.

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, in consultation with DSL Ms Liz Astley, or DDSL Mrs Amanda Benians.

If the child presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

5.0 Planning to support children's mental health and emotional wellbeing

We adhere to Supporting Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools, 2018 [Mental health and behaviour in schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/684212/Supporting_Mental_Health_and_Behaviour_in_Schools_2018.pdf), and hereby include the following key points in our policy, recognising the link between ongoing mental health difficulties, and Special Educational Needs.

3.24 Early intervention to address underlying causes of disruptive behaviour should include an assessment of whether appropriate provision is in place to support any SEN or disability that a pupil may have.

3.25 Not all children with mental health difficulties will have SEN. But persistent or serious mental health difficulties will often meet the definition of SEN, in that they lead to pupils having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age. As set out above, the graduated response process set out in the SEND Code of Practice provides a framework for deciding what support to offer, which would be good practice regardless of whether or not a pupil has SEN.

3.26 The majority of children with SEN will have their needs met through mainstream education providers and will not need Education, Health and Care plans (EHC plans).

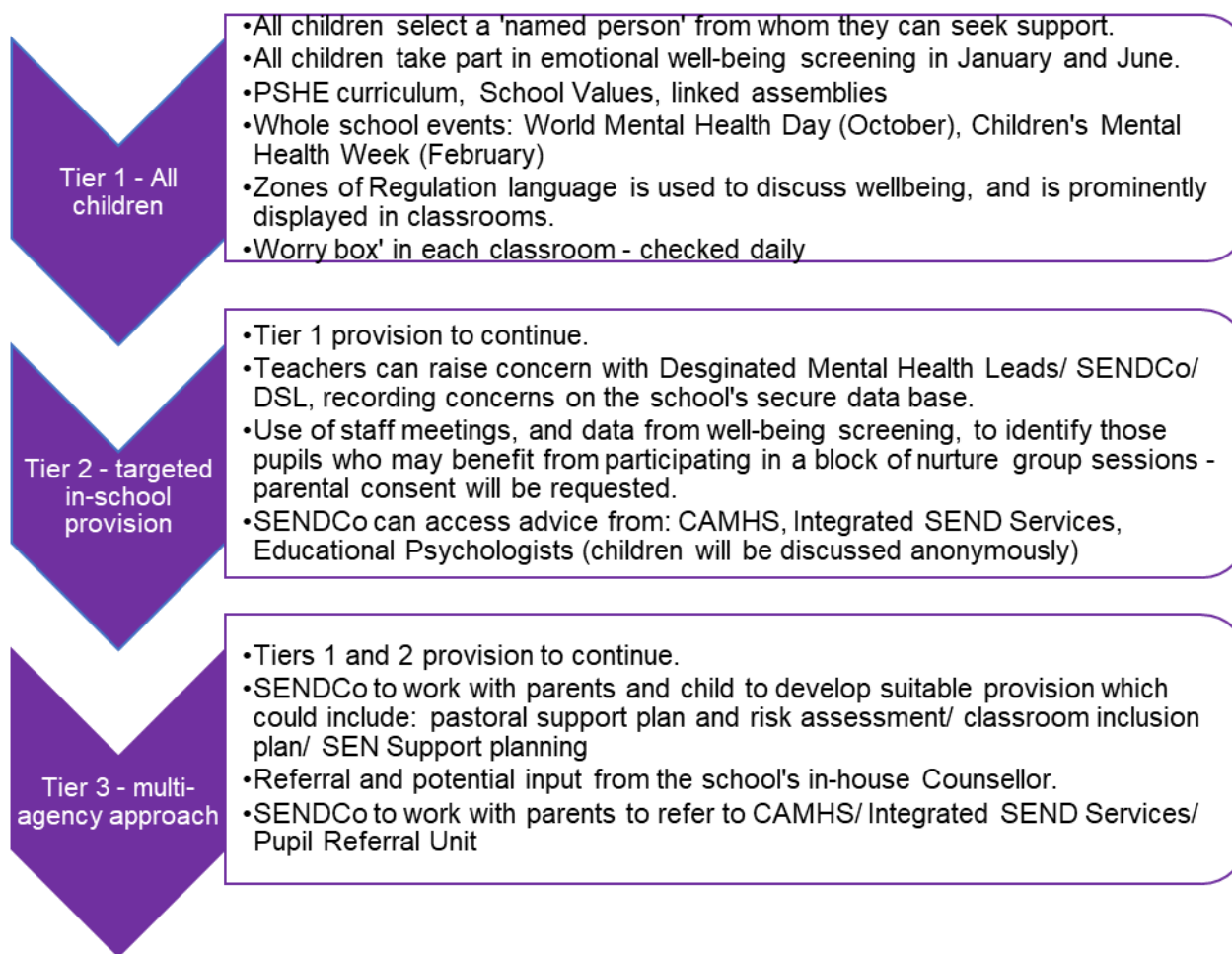
3.27 It is important that the qualified teacher who acts as the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENDCo Mr Gerard Geraghty) ensures that all adults working in the school understand their responsibilities to children with SEND. This includes pupils whose persistent mental health difficulties mean they need special educational provision. Specifically, the SENDCo will ensure colleagues understand how the school identifies and meets pupils' needs, provide advice and support to colleagues as needed and liaise with external SEND professionals as necessary.

Further details about our response can be found in the following policies and reports, available on our school website [The Stoke Poges School - SEND \(Special Educational needs and Disability\)](https://www.stokepoges.com/SEND):

- SEN and Inclusion Policy
- SEN Information Report

Teaching teams have received training in the graduated response to children's mental health, and the use of ordinarily available provision to maximise inclusion for children with mental health difficulties. This forms part of the school's curriculum offer and the use of high quality teaching.

Flow chart of the graduated approach to supporting children's mental health at The Stoke Poges School



When a pupil has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, a record of support will commence for a pupil, using a one, or a combination of:

- Classroom Support Plan/ Pupil Passport (detailing reasonable adjustments to be made to support a child's diagnosed condition)
- SEN Support Planning (if the child is on the school's SEN Register)
- Behaviour Support Plan and risk assessment

The development of any plans for support will involve the child, parents, and relevant professionals. The process of 'assess, plan, do, review' will be utilised to ensure plans remain representative of the child's needs.

Depending on the child's needs, the plan may include:

- Details of the pupil's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Contact details for outside agencies supporting the child and their family
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school and specific staff

6.0 Teaching about mental health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our students need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum.

We follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively.

<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing> Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote students' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people.

Additionally, we will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing students who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting students to support any of their friends who are facing challenges. **See Section 14 for Supporting Peers**

7.0 Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.

Within the school (noticeboards, common rooms, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites), 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	How to access it
Who it is aimed at	Why should they access it
	What is likely to happen next

8.0 Sources or support at school and in the local community

School Based Support includes:

- Use of whole school approaches to promote wellbeing and resilience
- A behaviour policy underpinned by a clear ethos and values
- Anti-bullying work
- Small group or 1 to 1 work with ELSA / Mental Health Champion
- Identification of key adult to build positive and trusting relationship
- Use of PSHE, circle time and curriculum approaches to explicitly teach rules and routines, build self-esteem and develop social and emotional skills to all learners

Local Support

In Buckinghamshire, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support. Details of support for children and their families can be found here:

[Family support | Family Information Service \(buckinghamshire.gov.uk\)](#)
[Special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND\) | Family Information Service \(buckinghamshire.gov.uk\)](#)
[Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Buckinghamshire | Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service \(oxfordhealth.nhs.uk\)](#)

At The Stoke Poges School, we also welcome children from the neighbouring Local Authority of Slough. Slough services can be accessed here:

[Slough's Local Offer | Slough For You \(sloughfamilyservices.org.uk\)](#)
[Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Berkshire \(berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk\)](#)

9.0 Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student 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 alert SENDCo Mr Gerard Geraghty / DSL Ms Liz Astley/ Deputy DSL Mrs Amanda Benians.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of 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

10.0 Targeted support and the graduated response

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We work closely with local services in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of school-aged children and are equipped to work at community, family and individual levels. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating.

We ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems; Working closely with local services
- Identifying and assessing children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems, using whole school screeners, and specialist tools such as the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, to identify strengths and areas for support.
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers.
- Agree a graduated response using one of the aforementioned planning tools.
- Implement a range of provision, in line with the Buckinghamshire Model of Ordinarily Available Provision and tiers of support.

According to the child's needs;

- Ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, including CAMHS, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur;
- Provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should take account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality;
- Provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it; and

- The identification, assessment, and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014.

11.0 Managing disclosures

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on the student's personal file, including:

- Date
- Name of member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Nature of the disclosure & main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

Depending on the nature of the disclosure, this information will be shared with:

- Ms Liz Astley, DSL/ DMHL
- Mrs Amanda Benians, DDSL
- Mr Gerard Geraghty, DMHL/ SENDCo

12.0 Confidentiality

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a student to either someone within or outside of the school, then this will be first discussed with the student.

We will tell them:

- Who we are going to tell
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them
- When we're going to tell them

Ideally, consent should be gained from the student first, however, there may be instances when information must be shared, such as students up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a colleague this ensures one single member of staff isn't solely responsible for the student. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Parents must always be informed, but students may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, a timescale of 24 hours is recommended to share this information before the school makes contact with the parents/carers.

If a pupil gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection procedures should be followed.

13.0 Whole school approach

13.1 Working with parents/carers

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents there are questions to consider first:

- Can we meet with the parents/carers face-to-face?
- Who should be present – children, staff, parents etc.?
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?

We are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and come to terms with the situation.

Signposting parents to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication should be kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone call might be beneficial at this stage.

We will ensure a record of the meeting and points discussed/agree are added to the pupil's record and a support plan is created if appropriate.

13.2 Supporting parents

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of and have access to promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems;
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.);
- Ensuring parents, carers and other family members living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing.

14.0 Supporting Peers

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the child 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 needs 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

15.0 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 to enable them to keep students safe. A nominated member of staff will receive professional Mental Health First Aid training or equivalent.

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 developing situations with one or more students.

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, for example access to training to support children who have experienced bereavement.

16.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is 01/09/2023. In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of SENDCo Mr Gerard Geraghty.

Any personnel changes will be implemented immediately.

Headteacher		Date	
Chair of Governing Board		Date	

Appendix 1 – Summary of resources and services

National

- [Mental health and behaviour in schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- [Equality, diversity and inclusion statement - education inspection framework \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- [School inspection handbook \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- [Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Local Authority

- [Family Information Service | Buckinghamshire Family Information Service](#)
- [Slough's Local Offer | Slough For You \(sloughfamilyservices.org.uk\)](https://sloughfamilyservices.org.uk)
- [Slough Services Guide | SEBDOS Parent Group Workshops](#)
- [Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Buckinghamshire | Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service \(oxfordhealth.nhs.uk\)](https://oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)
- [Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Berkshire \(berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk\)](https://berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk)
- [The Buckinghamshire Primary Pupil Referral Unit | We aim to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve both academically and behaviourally \(bucksprimarypru.co.uk\)](https://bucksprimarypru.co.uk)
- [SEBDOS - Littledown Special School \(littledownscool.co.uk\)](https://littledownscool.co.uk)

Charities/ National organisations

- [autism progression framework - Autism Education Trust](#)
- [Children's Mental Health Week \(place2be.org.uk\)](https://place2be.org.uk)
- [World Mental Health Day 2021 - National Awareness Days Calendar 2021](#)
- [Mapping PoS to Statutory guidance July 2019 update.pdf \(pshe-association.org.uk\)](https://pshe-association.org.uk)
- [Engaging with parents and carers | Childrens mental health and wellbeing in schools | Anna Freud Centre](#)
- [Advice for parents and carers of primary school pupils | Talking mental health primary school | Anna Freud Centre](#)
- [Working with Parents to Support Children's Learning | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF](#)
- <https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/resources/wellbeing-measurement-for-schools-staff-survey/>
- <https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/resources/supporting-staff-wellbeing-in-schools/>
- [Home : Mentally Healthy Schools](#)

Commissioned services

- [The Chiltern & South Bucks team | SchoolsWeb \(buckscc.gov.uk\)](https://buckscc.gov.uk)
- [Integrated Support Service | The Link \(slough.gov.uk\)](https://slough.gov.uk)

Short term services

- [Family Information Service | Buckinghamshire Family Information Service](#)
- [Slough's Local Offer | Slough For You \(sloughfamilyservices.org.uk\)](https://sloughfamilyservices.org.uk)
- [Slough Services Guide | SEBDOS Parent Group Workshops](#)

- [Solihull Approach | Understanding your child \(solihullapproachparenting.com\)](http://solihullapproachparenting.com)

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For technical support contact
solihull.approach-parenting@heartofengland.nhs.uk
or 0121 296 4448 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

Businesses

- [Branch maps – Cherry Garden School](#)
- [Primary and Secondary PSHE fulfilling RSE | Jigsaw PSHE Ltd](#)
- [RISE Assessment: Children's Wellbeing and Resilience Profiles \(edpsyched.co.uk\)](http://edpsyched.co.uk)
- [THE ZONES OF REGULATION: A CONCEPT TO FOSTER SELF-REGULATION & EMOTIONAL CONTROL - Welcome](#)