

Coombe Bissett CE VA Primary School



'Soar on wings like eagles, run and not grow weary, walk and not be faint' Isaiah 40:31

Wellbeing (including Mental Health) Policy

Last Updated: January 2022

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 Organization)

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do.

Together we can..
"Soar on wings like eagles,
Run and not grow weary,
Walk and not be faint."
Isaiah 40:31

Here at Coombe Bissett, we believe that each and every child is unique and special. It is our aim to enable each and every child:

- to flourish into and to be recognised as, a unique and special individual,
- to have the knowledge, skills and characteristics to equip them for their time in the world
- to feel dignity about themselves, have self-confidence, and to know how to manage their wellbeing
- to have the courage to stand up for what is right and make a positive difference to others and the world
- to know that they are loved and cherished within a caring Christian environment.

In other words:

FLY HIGH, RUN WITH JOY, WALK TALL....
AND TOGETHER WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

This is achieved through our Core set of Values which underpin all that we do: from our curriculum to our support for our children and their families; from our policies to the opportunities we provide.

CARE love and service	COMMITMENT friendship and respect	CREATIVITY inspiration and conservation
BELIEF trust and hope	BRAVERY courage and justice	BRILLIANCE wisdom and truth

In addition we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils and staff.

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 and staff affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental health and wellbeing overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and wellbeing issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

Lead Members of Staff

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

Berkeley Basinger-Adams - Designated Child Protection / Safeguarding Officer
Berkeley Basinger-Adams – Senior Mental Health Lead
Ruth Massie - SENCO
Naomi Bowers - PSHE lead

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Senior 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 Child Protection Office staff or 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 is appropriate, this will be led and managed by either the SENCO or the Senior Mental Health Lead.

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receives 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 and precautions
- 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 PSHE curriculum.

The PSHE curriculum we follow is designed by CORAM Education. However, we will contextualise the curriculum when required, by adapting to meet the specific needs of the cohort.

The emphasis of the PSHE curriculum is on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow the PSHE Association Guidance¹ 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 sources of support within school and in the local community.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking by ensuring pupils understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why to access it

¹ Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing URL= <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and> (accessed 02.02.2018)

- What is likely to happen next

As part of our commitment to supporting parents we will regularly signpost parents to support.

Our website will also include links to wellbeing advice.

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 our Senior Mental Health Lead.

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

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

All disclosures should be recorded in writing 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 Senior Mental Health Lead, who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we 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

We should never share information about a pupil without first telling them. Ideally, we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent. Particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Senior Mental Health Lead, this helps to safeguard our own 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.

Parents should be informed if there are concerns about their mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the DDSL must be informed immediately.

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 and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues 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.

We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

Working with All Parents

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through regular newsletters
- 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

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, 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

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 pupils safe.

The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.²

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 pupils.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the Senior Mental Health Lead and PSHE Lead, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in January 2025.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to our Senior Mental Health Lead by email via office@coombebissett.wilts.sch.uk

Supporting Staff

This policy recognises the key importance of the wellbeing of staff in order to support the wellbeing of pupils.

Following guidance from the Anna Freud National Centre for children and families website Coombe Bissett follows the 10 ways to support staff wellbeing principle:

- Have a mental health lead with responsibility for staff wellbeing (please note we also have a staff wellbeing governor)
- Include staff wellbeing in your mental health policy
- Promote openness about mental health in your school
- Offer supervision and encourage staff discussion groups
- Signpost staff to supportive services

² www.minded.org.uk [accessed 02/02/18].

- Look at simple ways to reduce workload
- Provide reflective spaces for staff at times of stress
- Set up a staff social group
- Start an annual staff wellbeing survey
- Put staff wellbeing on staff and governors' meetings agendas

Coombe Bissett Primary also takes advice from the DfE document *Ways to Reduce Staff Workload in Schools* (updated 2019).

National Guidance, Networking and Action Planning

Following National guidance a member of staff has attained the national qualification of Senior Mental Health Lead.

As part of this the school has produced an Action Plan for wellbeing. This Action Plan covers the following aspects but in a manageable and sustainable manner in relation to the context of Coombe Bissett Primary – a small village Primary school:

- Leadership and management
- Ethos and environment
- Identifying need and monitoring impact
- Curriculum, teaching and learning
- Student voice
- Staff development
- Parents, careers and families
- Targeted support and appropriate referral

This Action Plan follows the 5 Steps principles of: Leading Change, working together, understanding need, supporting staff and promoting wellbeing.

To support the school to provide the best quality provision and support we work closely with the Local Authority and relevant health agencies. We are also part of a national network of schools supporting each other with evidence based information and resources – Schools in Mind.

The school regularly references advice from Mentally Healthy Schools on the Anna Freud National Centre for children and families website.

Summary of school provision and how we assess

We follow the guidelines from the national training for Senior Mental Health Leads of the 'Pyramid of Need'. This 'Pyramid of need' (see below) identifies what we offer in relation to needs.

The role of all staff at Coombe Bissett is not to diagnose – we are not medically trained. Our job is based on the 'pyramid of need':

- For all = to provide a supportive ethos and environment
- For those we want to keep an eye on at school level

- For those that might need an intervention (at school level or from outside agencies)
- For those with higher needs beyond the skills of school staff

