



Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy.

At *John Chilton School* we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all students, their families, members of staff and governors.

Our open culture embeds our school values and encourages everyone's voices to be heard and respected in as practicable way as possible. We consolidate this through a culture of staff being approachable and emotionally-aware.

We aim for mental health to be a priority for our community, underpinned in our school by the use of effective policies and procedures to ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected by mental health issues - both directly and indirectly .

The school has a strong Social, Emotional, Mental Health Team who specifically support pupils who need provision in these areas. The team supports staff with strategies to support pupils and train other colleagues alongside therapy team

The school has a Family Worker and Social worker who works closely with families to support their mental health needs, signposting to advice where necessary and offering regular meetings, workshops and support.

The school staff includes a strong Multi-Disciplinary Team with wealth of experience that supports families with issues linked to mental health whenever possible.

Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff, governors and family members at John Chiltons School as an overarching, approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

There are times when there is inevitable difference in opinion between staff, pupils, families. The school always aims to deal proportionately, promptly and with clarity, being mindful of the emotions of others during difficult conversations, for which many staff are trained.

The school values mediation and restorative justice practices.

Where there are complaints from pupils, staff, families, these are taken seriously and respectfully to support the wellbeing of those involved. The school acknowledges that difference of opinion in many interactions and processes are followed as smoothly and clearly as possible, in timely manner, to support the mental health of all involved.

The School Leadership Team endeavours to support wellbeing and mental health in staff, within the parameters of the working conditions and protocol of schools, signposting to external support for staff who would benefit from guidance for additional advice. Many elements of mental health are linked to life outside schools as well as that within it and staff are encouraged to take responsibility for their own mental health but encouraged to access strategies to do this. The distribution of strategies to support the wellbeing of one group of pupils or staff should not disproportionately outweigh or impair the wellbeing of another.

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 and staff 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
- Raise awareness of the importance of work life balance , where possible within the realistic boundaries of job descriptions, allowing for the promotion of wellbeing for all staff in the school community: support staff, teachers, Admin Team , auxiliary teams, Multi Disciplinary Team and Leadership.

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:

Overall responsibility: Sue Rademacher

DSL: Samira Assou

PSHE (including RSHE and drugs education): Marlana Dalton, Lidia Cernat

Therapies: Aidan Meech

Family Worker: Ankita Banerjee

SEMH: Marlana Dalton

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of student, in the first instance they should speak to the DSL Samira Assou.

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.

If there is concern about the wellbeing or Mental health of a colleagues, the staff member should liaise with line manger but other team members can help, including leadership, when the appropriate stage of support has been identified.

EHCPs

When a pupil has been identified as having emotional needs or has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, the pupil's Education Health and Care Plan should be updated and presented to the relevant parties. The review of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Details of the pupil's situation/condition/diagnosis
- 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

Teaching about mental health

Our developmental PSHE curriculum includes the skills, information, and understanding required by our students to maintain their mental health and safety.

The precise content of lessons will be decided by the needs of the cohort, but we will also use PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive way. Mental health and emotional awareness is built into PSHE curriculum across the school. It is promoted through whole school events and assemblies.

Signposting

We ensure that everyone in our school—staff, students, and parents—are conscious of the resources available to them and how to get more help. This is often shared at meetings, Annual reviews or as and when needed.

School and Community Based Support

- Social, Emotional and Mental Health support
(Weekly/ daily/ bespoke interventions for specific students, bereavement groups, sensory play, social clubs, Lego therapy, therapeutic interventions delivered by trained staff)
 - School Counsellor + Music Therapist
 - Draw and Talk emotional support intervention with trained school staff
 - Trained school bereavement team
 - Key team trained in Trauma, Adverse Childhood Experiences and insecure attachment
 - MDT Team with experience of emotional wellbeing
 - Family worker and school social worker to support with identified key needs and professionals
 - An allocated Education Psychologist where this has been raised as a priority
 - Regular events and Parent Workshops in school

Our School professionals:

- Provide specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems;
- Identify and assess in line with the SEMH assessment tool, children and young people who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- Provide a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective,

According to the pupil'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.
Provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it;

- Lead on SEMH strategies such as Zones of Regulation -develops awareness of feelings, energy and alertness levels while exploring a variety of tools and strategies for regulation, prosocial skills, self-care, and overall wellness

Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student, community-member or colleague 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 Senior leadership who might liaise with other professionals, including, where necessary, social care or medical staff

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 sessions 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

Working with parents/ carers

We are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues or challenges can be upsetting and distressing. Therefore they might 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 recognise that families play 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.);
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills. This may involve providing information or offering small, group-based programmes run by community nurses (such as school nurses and health visitors) or other appropriately trained health or education practitioners; and
- 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. This will include support to participate in any parenting sessions, by

offering a range of times for the sessions or providing help with transport and childcare. We recognise this might involve liaison with family support agencies.

Supporting Peers

When a student or colleague 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 student who is suffering and their parents.

Staff Wellbeing

- SLT Open Door Policy
- Paid “Wellbeing days” across year
- Limit meetings where possible, keeping to agreed timeframes for meetings
- Identifying and distributing tasks fairly and in line with School Improvement plan to ensure priorities are focus rather than additional workload
- Advice on ways to prioritise workload, delegation and reducing email traffic
- Meetings are purposeful with a clear time frame and agenda
- Flexibility with any remaining teachers’ directed hours after timetable and school hours and meetings are factored-in
- Staff encouraged to attend social events or after school family events but this is not enforced
- Meetings accommodated at end of each day to support classes complete tasks
- Staff given PPA in appropriate blocks of time where possible
- Staff supported in phases and teams
- Very active staff social committee
- Teachers given leadership time for dedicated subject-specific tasks
- Regular team/ whole school briefings to support morale and a sense of belonging and community
- Flexibility (where possible) for staff to attend their own children’s school events/ family events
- Protocols, policies, expectations and job responsibilities must be followed but SLT are approachable and understanding of the need for flexibility at times, within possible boundaries
- *Work Place Options* is a confidential counselling service bought for all staff if needed
- Staff wellbeing a regular item for SLT to discuss and monitor through each term
- Limited meetings in weeks where other events are taking place
- Calendar of events and meetings planned out in advance to avoid overload in any given week
- Staffroom available with constant hot water for breaks

Safeguarding

Most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education document links mental health concerns with safeguarding. The guidance now advises that all staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Whilst it is acknowledged that ‘only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem’. KCSIE 2020

stipulates that staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Training

Staff will receive refresher training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training 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 developing situations with one or more students.

Policy Written by Lidia C 03/02/23

Policy to be reviewed February 2025