



SAFE START SCHOOL

WILLPOWER-INITIATIVE-SUCCESS-EMPATHY-RESPECT

Pupil Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

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Introduction

This policy sets out how Safe Start School promotes, identifies and responds to pupil mental health needs in line with KCSIE 2025, the Independent School Standards, and the Department for Education expectations. Mental health is treated as a safeguarding priority.

Safeguarding and Mental Health

Mental health concerns may indicate abuse, neglect or exploitation. Any concerns including self-harm or suicidal ideation must be treated as safeguarding concerns and reported immediately to the DSL.

Staff must not investigate concerns but must record and report promptly.

Staff roles and responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility

All staff have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

Mental health concerns must be treated as a safeguarding matter where there is risk of harm, including self-harm or suicidal ideation.

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

Mental Health Lead	Jodie Taylor
Mental Health Governor	Julie Morrish
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Jodie Taylor
PSHE Lead	Jacqui Rayner

The DSL holds ultimate responsibility for safeguarding decisions relating to mental health.

The Mental Health Lead does not replace safeguarding processes.

Clear reporting line:

- Staff → DSL (immediately for risk)
- Staff → Mental Health Lead (for early support)

Our Mental Health Lead:

- Leads and works with all staff to co-ordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing
- Works with the PSHE leader re: teaching about mental health
- Provide advice and support to staff and organise training and updates
- Works alongside DSL to ensure appropriate safeguarding and risk are assessed and responded to accordingly
- Liaise with mental health services and make individual referrals to them
- Delivers Mental Health First Aid training affiliated to Mental Health First Aid England
- Coordinates the emotional wellbeing team across the whole school.

Definition

“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 contribute to her or his community.” (World Health Organisation)

Policy statement

At Safe Start School, we recognise that mental health is intrinsically linked to safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, and educational outcomes.

We adopt a whole-school, trauma-informed approach, ensuring early identification, timely intervention, and appropriate referral pathways.

In line with statutory guidance, we recognise that:

- Mental health concerns can be an indicator of abuse, neglect, or exploitation
- All staff must respond in accordance with safeguarding procedures
- Pupils with SEMH needs require reasonable adjustments and graduated support

At Safe Start School, we are committed to supporting the positive mental health and wellbeing of our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers). We have a supportive and caring ethos, and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued. We endeavour to ensure that children can manage times of change and stress and aim to ensure that they are supported to reach their potential or to access help when they need it.

We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support. 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. We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging
- The Sport curriculum
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
- Weekly assemblies
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others, with a clear focus on restorative justice
- Providing opportunities to reflect (tutor time/ assemblies)
- Enabling access to appropriate support
- Mental health and PSHE for all year groups
- Wellbeing Week and access to information around the school
- Pastoral office open door policy
- Enrichment themed weeks
- Student Mental Health Champions
- Mental Health First Aiders
- Safe zones
- Student Council
- PACE culture
- Focus tools (previously fidget toys)
- Sensory rooms
- Student surveys
- 7 minute briefings to keep up-to-date with whole school approach strategy (see appendix)
- Trained staff: ACEs, mental health and wellbeing, trauma-informed, PACE, safeguarding

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
- Recognising, responding and referring when an outside service is deemed an appropriate approach
- Wellbeing initiatives
- Thrive model

This policy supports compliance with Part 3 and Part 8 of the Independent School Standards Regulations regarding welfare, health, safety, and leadership.

Teaching about Mental Health

At Safe Start School we take a whole-school approach to promoting positive mental health, aiming to help children become more resilient, happy and successful. In addition to this, we help to support pupils to work in a pro-active way to avoid problems arising. 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're teaching.

We will also use PSHE lessons to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner. We do this by:

- Creating and applying consistent ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and well-being
- Adhering to a positive, restorative approach to behaviour management
- Helping children socially to form and maintain relationships
- Helping children to feel comfortable about sharing any concerns or worries
- Teaching children emotional skills and an awareness of mental health so that they understand their emotions and feelings better
- Promoting self-esteem to ensure pupils understand their importance in the world
- Helping children to be resilient learners and to manage setbacks
- Identifying children who have mental health challenges and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services, parents and carers
- Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience
- Developing an open culture where it's normal to talk about mental health

Mental health education is delivered through a **planned RSHE curriculum**, in line with statutory requirements, ensuring pupils are taught:

- Emotional literacy and regulation
- Safe ways to seek help
- Online and offline risk awareness
- Resilience and coping strategies

Staff must avoid delivering content that could **trigger or re-traumatise pupils**, particularly in SEMH settings, and adapt content accordingly.

Targeted support

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

- Restorative approaches
- Supported Friendship group sessions

- Targeted use of Zones of Regulation resources
- Managing feelings resources e.g. 'worry boxes' and 'worry eaters'
- Managing emotions resources
- Think Brick
- Equine
- Pets as Therapy (PAT) dog sessions
- Therapeutic activities including art, Lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques.
- Life coaching
- Five Ways to Wellbeing
- Independent living
- Sleep Hygiene
- Healthy Eating
- School Nurse

The school will make use of resources to assess and track well-being as appropriate including:

- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire
- The Boxall Profile
- Social and Emotional and Mental Health scoring
- Attendance Support Plans

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support. Within the school (noticeboards, meeting rooms, toilets, wellbeing rooms, classrooms, etc.), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events, using the Thrive model.

The aim of this is to ensure pupils understand:

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

7 Early identification and warning signs

All staff will be vigilant in identifying a range of possible difficulties that may be contributing to a pupil's poor mental health, including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality

- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Family circumstance
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators
- Change in behaviour
- Early trauma / ACEs
- Attainment

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 DSL.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking of / evidence of self-harm or suicidal ideation
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

All concerns must be recorded and reported in line with safeguarding procedures.

Any disclosure or indication of self-harm, suicidal ideation, or risk must be treated as an immediate safeguarding concern.

- Use of chronologies and CPOMS (or equivalent system)
- Patterns over time must be tracked
- Attendance + behaviour = key indicators

8. Assessment, interventions and support

All concerns are reported to designated adults within the school. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and/or the DSL assess these needs to ensure that the child receives the appropriate support, either from within the school or from an external specialist service, as quickly as possible.

The school operates a graduated iThrive model:

Stage 1 – Getting Advice and Signposting

- Whole-school wellbeing strategies

Stage 2 – Getting Help

- Internal interventions (e.g. therapy, mentoring)

Stage 3 – Getting More Help

- Referral to external agencies (CAMHS, Early Help, etc.)

Stage 4 - Getting Risk Support

- Urgent, needing help now
- 111 option 2 GMMH

All decisions are:

- Recorded
- Risk assessed
- Reviewed regularly

Where risk is identified, safeguarding procedures take precedence over intervention planning.

Self-Harm and Suicide Response Protocol

If a pupil discloses self-harm or suicidal thoughts:

- Stay calm and listen
- Do not promise confidentiality
- Report immediately to DSL
- Ensure pupil is not left alone if at risk
- DSL completes risk assessment

Parents will be informed unless doing so places the child at risk.

Emergency services will be contacted where necessary. First aid support may be required.

Working with parents and carers

Parents or carers can approach their child/children's class teacher if they have mental health concerns. This will be cascaded to the Mental Health Lead for assessment.

To support parents and carers we will:

- Provide information online on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes
- Share ideas about how parents and carers can support positive mental health in their children
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics taught in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this at home
- Organise workshops and presentations on mental health, anxiety, resilience and steps to wellbeing
- Promote participation and co-production where appropriate
- Post and Pre diagnosis support and Waiting Well support

When a concern has been raised, the Mental Health Lead and/or a DSL will:

- Contact parents to discuss the outcome of any assessment (Although there may be cases where parents and carers cannot be involved due to child protection issues)
- Discuss any relevant referrals to external agencies
- Signpost parents to further information or provide resources to take away
- Create a chronology of actions and events
- Agree mental health care and protection plan where appropriate including clear next steps. This could include drawing up an individualised wellbeing cycle support plan, this would be created and shared with the pupil, parents and relevant professionals

o This may include:

- Details of a pupil's condition and or concern
- Special requirements and precautions/risks
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do in an emergency
- Wrap (wellness and recovery action plan).
- Discuss how parents can support their child through strategies or signposts to parenting support groups
- 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.

The school will work in partnership with parents unless doing so would:

- Place the child at risk
- Compromise a safeguarding investigation

Parents must be informed of concerns, except in safeguarding cases

SEND and SEMH

Support aligns with SEND Code of Practice using Assess–Plan–Do–Review.

EHCPs and SEMH needs are fully integrated into planning.

Disclosure and Confidentiality

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where:

- A pupil is at risk of harm
- A safeguarding concern is identified

Staff must:

- Be transparent about confidentiality limits
- Record and report concerns immediately to the DSL

Information sharing will follow:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR
- Safeguarding principles of “necessary, proportionate, relevant”

Working with specialist services

As part of our targeted provision, the school will work with other agencies to support children’s emotional health and well-being. The school will actively engage with multi-agency partners in line with safeguarding duties, including:

- CAMHS
- Early Help
- Social Care
- Educational Psychology
- School Nurse
- Mental Health Support for Schools
- Use of local directories

The DSL will coordinate where safeguarding thresholds are met.

Training

All staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their annual Safeguarding training and KCSIE updates to

enable them to keep pupils safe. Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be supplied via our Mental Health Lead. Key staff (DSL, Mental Health Lead) receive advanced training in risk assessment, self-harm, and trauma-informed practice.

Any additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more pupils.

Links to other policies

This policy links to our

- Safeguarding policy
- Attendance policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Online Safety policy
- Equality statement
- Anti Bullying policy
- Risk Assessment policy
- SEN policy
- Behaviour policy

Monitoring and evaluation

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy will be published on the school website – hard copies are available on request. The policy will be reviewed every year, the wellbeing provision will be continuously monitored and any changes required to the policy will be updated accordingly.

Useful links

Young Minds is one of the UK's leading charities for children and young people's mental health

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families- is a charity dedicated to providing training and support for child mental health services

<https://www.annafreud.org/>

Place to Be is one of the UK's leading mental health charities

<https://www.place2be.org.uk/>

NSPCC help and advice for parents and families dealing with mental health problems in everyday life

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/childrens-mental-health/>

Barnados run many services supporting young people's emotional health and wellbeing, from one-to-one counselling to group work and school-based programmes.

<https://www.barnados.org.uk/what-we-do/helping-families/mental-health>

Lucy Faithfull Foundation

<https://www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk>

The Mix

<https://www.themix.org.uk>

CAMHS

<https://mft.nhs.uk/camhs/our-services/>

Thrive Approach

<https://implementingthrive.org/implemented/case-studies-2/tameside-and-glossops-offer-to-children-and-young-people-who-require-emotional-health-and-wellbeing-help-and-support/>

Riding the Rapid - Diagnosis support and mental health

<https://hsm.manchester.gov.uk/kb5/manchester/directory/service.page?id=LJtjKdidMZQ>

Kooth

<https://www.kooth.com/>

TOG Mind

<https://www.togsmind.org/>

Anthony Seddon

<https://tasfund.org.uk/>

Starling

<https://starlingcio.org/>

Shore Space

<https://shorespace.org.uk>

Papyrus

<https://www.papyrus-uk.org>

Talk Listen Change

<https://talklistenchange.org.uk>