



# Esh CE Primary School

## Mental Health Policy

**Determined:** March 2025

**Local Governing Review Date:** March 27

## Mental Health and Well-being Policy

**“Mental health is state of well-being in which every individual realises his or 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 Organisation 2014)**

At Esh C.E. Primary School our Christian Vision is ‘Building Together’. Any building needs to have a firm and solid foundation. In the story of the wise and foolish builders, Matthew 7:24-27, Jesus talks about listening to and obeying his teaching. When ‘building together’, we put into practice the teachings of Jesus as we support, encourage and work as a whole school community to act out our Christians values of Respect, Compassion and Perseverance.

We believe that all children are entitled to develop to their fullest potential. It is widely recognised that a child’s emotional health and well-being influences their cognitive development and learning, as well as their physical and social health and their mental well-being in adulthood. The Department for Education recognises that, in order to help their pupils succeed, schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy.

### Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children and Families Act 2014
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2002
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Children Act 1989

This policy has been created with regard to the following DfE guidance:

- DfE (2023) ‘Keeping children safe in education 2023’
- DfE (2018) ‘Mental health and behaviour in schools’
- DfE (2016) ‘Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future’
- DfE (2015) ‘Special educational needs and disabilities code of practice: 0 to 25’

This policy also has due regard to the school’s policies including, but not limited to, the following:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Administering Medication Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy

We have a supportive and caring ethos, and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued.

At Esh we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support.

We aim to:

- Help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
- Help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- Help children socially to form and maintain relationships
- Promote self-esteem and ensure children know they count
- Encourage children to be confident as an individual
- Help children to manage setbacks and develop emotional resilience

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Providing opportunities to reflect
- Access to appropriate support that meets their needs

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

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue, the SEND policy where a student has an identified special educational need and the safeguarding policy in relation to prompt action and wider concerns of vulnerability.

#### Staff roles and responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils and understand about possible risk factors. However, key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead/SENDCO - Andrew Park
- Designated Deputy Safeguarding leads - Alison James, Georgina Dismore
- Senior Mental Health Lead/ PSHCE Lead - Kaye Wilson
- Mental Health and Well-being Support Assistant - Danielle Walton
- Trust Mental Health and Well-being Lead - Steph Jones

## Curriculum

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHCE curriculum. The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include: circle time, managing feelings resources e.g. 'worry boxes' and therapeutic activities including art.

## Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services. Within the school (noticeboards) and through our communication channels (newsletters, website), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events. The aim of this is to ensure staff, parents and pupils understand:

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

## Identifying needs and warning signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional well-being issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the designated safeguarding lead.

## Possible warning signs include

- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Isolation from family and friends and becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Falling academic achievement
- Secretive behaviour
- Not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE or wearing long sleeves in hot weather.
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

## Disclosures by children and confidentiality

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgemental to children who disclose a concern about themselves or others. The emotional and physical safety of our children is paramount and staff listen rather than advise or explore 'Why?'. Staff make it clear to children that if we think it necessary for us to pass our concerns about a child on then we should discuss with the child:

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

#### Working with parents and carers

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

- Highlighting sources of information and support about mental health and emotional well-being
- Sharing and allowing parents to access sources of further support
- Ensuring that all parents are aware of who to talk to and how to go about this if they have concerns about their child
- Making our emotional well-being and mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Sharing ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children

#### Working with other agencies and partners

The school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and well-being including:

- The school nurse
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Therapists

#### Supporting and Training Staff

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 [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk) provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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 to developing situations with one or more pupils.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and well-being of staff is an integral and essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and well-being. Our expectation is that staff have a responsibility to support their own mental health by accessing appropriate support, looking after their own mental health and to develop resilience and coping strategies. We offer the following to support our staffs' positive mental health.

- SLT have an open-door policy for all staff.
- SLT proactively support staff who are experiencing mental health difficulties.
- Staff mental wellbeing taken into consideration when deploying staff to various roles around school.
- Reasonable adjustments for staff with recognised mental health issues.
- Sign post staff to appropriate support mechanisms such as counsellor, GP etc.
- Staff meetings are held where individuals can air their views and feel supported.
- Recognise individual staff strengths through initiatives such as Staff Shout Out board, positive mentions in newsletters; individual and public thanks and praise; feedback from observations; learning walks
- Encourage and support staff to put into perspective the everyday challenges of working with pupils.
- Flexible working applications are always seriously considered within the confines of what is best for the pupils.
- No expectation to be at work outside of contracted/directed hours.
- A well-being day to be taken at staff member's own choosing.
- Regular review of practices and workload.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Managing Sickness and Absence Policy
- Non-Sickness Absence Policy
- Code of Conduct

Date: March 2025

Review Date: March 2027