Pupil Mental Health Policy

Author: Mental Health Lead

Approval: Full Governing Body

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Next Review: May 2027

Policy statement

At Castle Primary School, we are committed to supporting the mental health and well-being of pupils, parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders.
'A mentally healthy school is one that adopts a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing. It involves all parts of the school, working together and being committed. It needs partnership working between senior leaders, teachers and all school staff, as well as parents, carers and the wider community.' Mentally Healthy Schools

Scope

This policy is intended to:

- Provide guidance to school staff on our school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across all communities in the school.
- Inform pupils and parents about the support that they can expect from the school in respect of supporting mental health and wellbeing.

Read this policy in conjunction with

- SEND policy
- Behaviour policy
- Anti-bullying policy

Policy aims

At Castle Primary School we aim to;

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing across the whole school.
- Create a culture of wellbeing and inclusion.
- Foster a positive atmosphere in school, where pupils feel able to discuss and reflect on their own experiences with mental health openly.
- Enable children to become emotional intelligent linking their thoughts, feelings and behaviour.
- Celebrate all of the way's pupils achieve at our school, both inside and outside the classroom.
- Allow pupils to participate in forming our approach to mental health by promoting pupil voice.
- Give pupils the opportunity to develop their self-esteem by taking responsibility for themselves and others.
- Spread awareness of the varieties of ways mental health issues can manifest.
- Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues.
- Provide support to staff working with pupils with mental health issues.
- Provide support and access to resources to pupils experiencing mental ill health alongside their peers, their families and the staff who work with them.

This policy was written in conjunction with:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- Articles 3 and 23 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across the school and for understanding risk factors. If any members of staff are concerned about a pupil's mental health or wellbeing, they should inform the DSL and SENCO.

Certain members of staff have extra duties to lead on mental health and wellbeing in school. These members of staff include:

- Headteacher (Justin Bartlett)
- Designated Safe-guarding Lead (Justin Bartlett)
- Deputy Designated Safe-guarding Lead (Angela Thomas)
- SENCO (Nadine Ricketts)
- ELSA (Tammy Sellers)
- Mental Health Lead (Nicola Murphy)

Whole school approach to promoting mental health awareness

Statutory Guidelines for Health Education (through PSHE)

Through our teaching we shall;

- Teach children how to be physically healthy, focusing on the importance of regular exercise, good nutrition and sufficient sleep.
- Teach children about the importance of looking after their mental wellbeing, giving them the knowledge and capability to take care of themselves and ensuring they know how to access support if needed.
- Teach children the language and knowledge to understand the normal range of emotions that we all experience. Help children to articulate how they are feeling physically and emotionally and judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate.
- Teach children self-care techniques, personal hygiene, prevention of health and well-being problems and basic first aid.
- Teach children strategies to learn self-control and the ability to self-regulate.
- Teach children to keep themselves physically safe, including safe on-line.
- Teach children to be aware of how much time they spend online and to understand why social media, computer games and online gaming have age restrictions.
- Teach children about the benefits of hobbies, interests and participation in their own communities.
- Help children to believe that they can achieve goals, both academic and personal; to stick to tasks that will help them achieve these goals, even when the reward may be distant or uncertain; and to recover from knocks and challenging periods in their lives.
- Enable children to understand how: isolation, loneliness, unhappiness and bullying can have a negative impact on our health and wellbeing.

At Castle Primary School we all have a role to play and as staff will:

- Create a positive atmosphere around mental health
- Help children to understand their emotions and built their emotional intelligence, understanding their thoughts and feelings better and keep themselves safe
- Help children feel comfortable expressing any concerns or worries

- Help children socially to form and maintain relationships
- Promote self -esteem
- Encourage children to be confident and ‘dare to be different’
- Help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision making (school council)
- Celebrate academic and non-academic achievements
- Provide opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Provide opportunities for reflection and mindfulness
- Provide access to appropriate support that meets pupils’ need’s

We shall do this by:

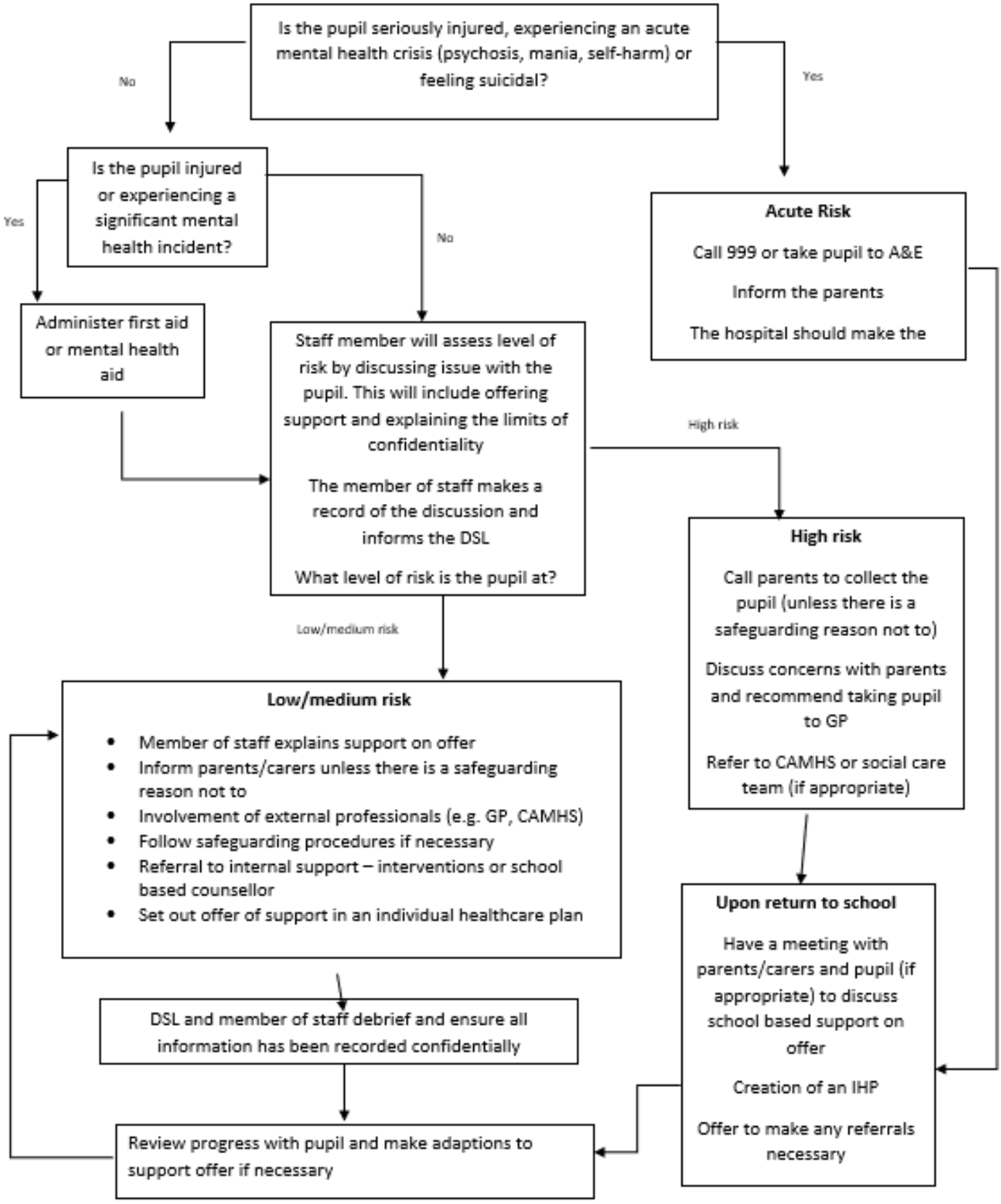
- Universal, whole-school approaches
- Specialised, targeted approaches for pupils with specific emotional needs – ELSA, Rainbow group etc
- Therapeutic activities such as art, Lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques
- The teaching of the PSHE curriculum and P4C
- Emotion coaching and ACE training for staff
- Using zones of regulation
- The use of managing emotions resources
- Discussing mental health with pupils to break down stigma
- Encourage pupils to disclose when they think their mental health is deteriorating.
- Children’s mental health week
- All staff having information about the importance of children’s mental wellbeing and the correlation between this and their ability to learn and be resilient
- Supporting parents and carers with advice on maintaining their child’s mental health

Training and support for staff

Staff have had/ will have training so that they:

- Have a good understanding of what pupils’ mental health needs are
- Know how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health
- Know a clear process to follow if they identify a pupil in need of help
- Develop an understanding of emotion coaching and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis



Warning signs

All staff will be on the lookout for signs that a pupil's mental health is deteriorating. Some warning signs include:

- Changes in mood or energy level
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Changes in attitude in lessons or academic attainment
- Changes in level of personal hygiene
- Social isolation
- Poor attendance or punctuality
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, worthlessness or feeling like a failure
- Secretive behaviour
- Covering parts of the body that they wouldn't have previously
- Refusing to participate in P.E. or being secretive when changing clothes
- Physical pain or nausea with no obvious cause
- Physical injuries that appear to be self-inflicted
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide

Managing disclosures

If a pupil makes a disclosure about themselves or a peer to a member of staff, staff should remain calm, non-judgmental and reassuring.
Staff will focus on the pupil's emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to find out why they are feeling that way or offering advice.
Staff will always follow the school's safeguarding policy and pass on all concerns to the DSL.
All disclosures are recorded and stored on C-POMS.
When making a record of a disclosure, staff will include:

- The full name of the member of staff who is making the record
- The full name of the pupil(s) involved
- The date, time and location of the disclosure
- The context in which the disclosure was made
- Any questions asked or support offered by the member of staff

Confidentiality

Staff should not promise a pupil that they will keep a disclosure secret, instead they will be upfront about the limits of confidentiality.

A disclosure cannot be kept secret because:

- Being the sole person responsible for a pupil's mental health could have a negative impact on the member of staff's own mental health and wellbeing
- The support put in place for the pupil will be dependent on the member of staff being at school
- Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the pupil in question

Staff should always share disclosures with at least one appropriate colleague. This will usually be the DSL, information needs to be shared with other members of staff or external professionals, it will be done on a need-to-know basis.

Before sharing information disclosed by a pupil with a third party, the member of staff will discuss it with the pupil and explain:

- Who they will share the information with
- What information they will share
- Why they need to share that information

Staff will attempt to receive consent from the pupil to share their information, but the safety of the pupil comes first.
Parents will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case the Child Protection safeguarding policy will be followed.

Process for managing confidentiality around disclosures

1. Pupil makes a disclosure
2. Member of staff offers support
3. Member of staff explains the issues around confidentiality and rationale for sharing a disclosure with DSL.
4. Member of staff will attempt to get the pupil's consent to share – if no consent is given, explain to the pupil who you will share the information with and explain why you need to do this
5. Member of staff will record the disclosure and share the information with the chosen elected member of staff
6. The DSL will inform the parent/carer (if appropriate)
7. Any other relevant members of staff or external professionals will be informed on a need-to-know basis

Assessing what further support is needed

If a pupil is identified as having a mental health need, the SENCO/ ELSA/ Class teacher will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to making an assessment and providing tailored support.

Assessing what the pupil's mental health needs are

- Creating a plan to provide support
- Taking the actions set out in the plan
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the support offered

Internal mental health interventions

Where appropriate, a pupil will be offered support that is tailored to their needs as part of the graduated approach detailed above. The support offered at our school includes:

- First wave – Discussion with Year group team, Phase Leader and SENCO
- ELSA referral (skills development intervention)
- Nurture group
- PLP

If a pupil's needs cannot be met by the internal offer the school provides (there are no trained counsellors within school) the school will make, or encourage parents to make, a referral for external support.

A pupil could be referred to:

- GP or School Nurse
- CAMHS
- Local counselling services via Hampshire Youth Access
- Child Wellbeing practioner
- Signposted to Beacon House

Supporting and collaborating with parents and carers

We will work with parents and carers to support pupils' mental health by:

- Asking parents/carers to inform us of any mental health needs their child is experiencing, so we can offer the right support
- Informing parents/carers of mental health concerns that we have about their child
- Engaging with parents/carers to understand their mental health and wellbeing issues, as well as that of their child, and support them accordingly to make sure there is holistic support for them and their child
- Highlighting sources of information and support about mental health and wellbeing on our school website, including the mental health and wellbeing policy
- Liaising with parents/carers to discuss strategies that can help promote positive mental health in their child
- Providing guidance to parents/carers on navigating and accessing relevant local mental health services or other sources of support (e.g. parent forums)
- Keeping parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their child is learning about in PSHE, and sharing ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

When informing parents about any mental health concerns we have about their child, we will endeavor to do this face to face.
These meetings can be difficult, so the school will ensure that parents are given time to reflect on what has been discussed, and that lines of communication are kept open at the end of the meeting.
A record of what was discussed, and action plans agreed upon in the meeting will be recorded and added to CPOMS.

Supporting peers

Watching a friend experience poor mental health can be extremely challenging for pupils. Pupils may also be at risk of learning and developing unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other.
We will offer support to all pupils impacted by mental health directly and indirectly.
We will review the support offered on a case-by-case basis. Support might include:

- Strategies they can use to support their friends
- Things they should avoid doing/saying
- Warning signs to look out for

Signposting

Sources of support will be displayed around the school and linked to on the school website, newsletter so pupils and parents are aware of how they can get help.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by Nicola Murphy (SMHL) in collaboration with Justin Bartlett (Headteacher and DSL) and Nadine Ricketts (SENCO) annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Governing Body.