



“We Care.”

Children’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Persons Responsible: Scott Roche/Victoria Bryant/Carys Golding

Policy review: April 2024

Review period: Annually

Next Review: April 2025

Principal:

Date: April 2024

Trustee:

Date: April 2024

Introduction

At Hamstel Infant School and Nursery we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children, parents, carers, staff and the wider community.

This policy focuses on children's mental health and wellbeing.

Aims

- Set out our school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all children across our school.
- Provide guidance to staff on their role in supporting children's mental health and wellbeing, including how they can foster and maintain an inclusive culture in which children feel able to talk about and reflect on their experiences of mental health.
- Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues.
- Inform children and their parents/carers about the support they can expect from our school in respect of children's mental health and wellbeing, and provide them with access to resources.

This policy was written following discussion with staff, parents and trustees.

It should be read alongside:

- SEND policy
- Behaviour policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy

Legislation and guidance

This policy was written with regard to:

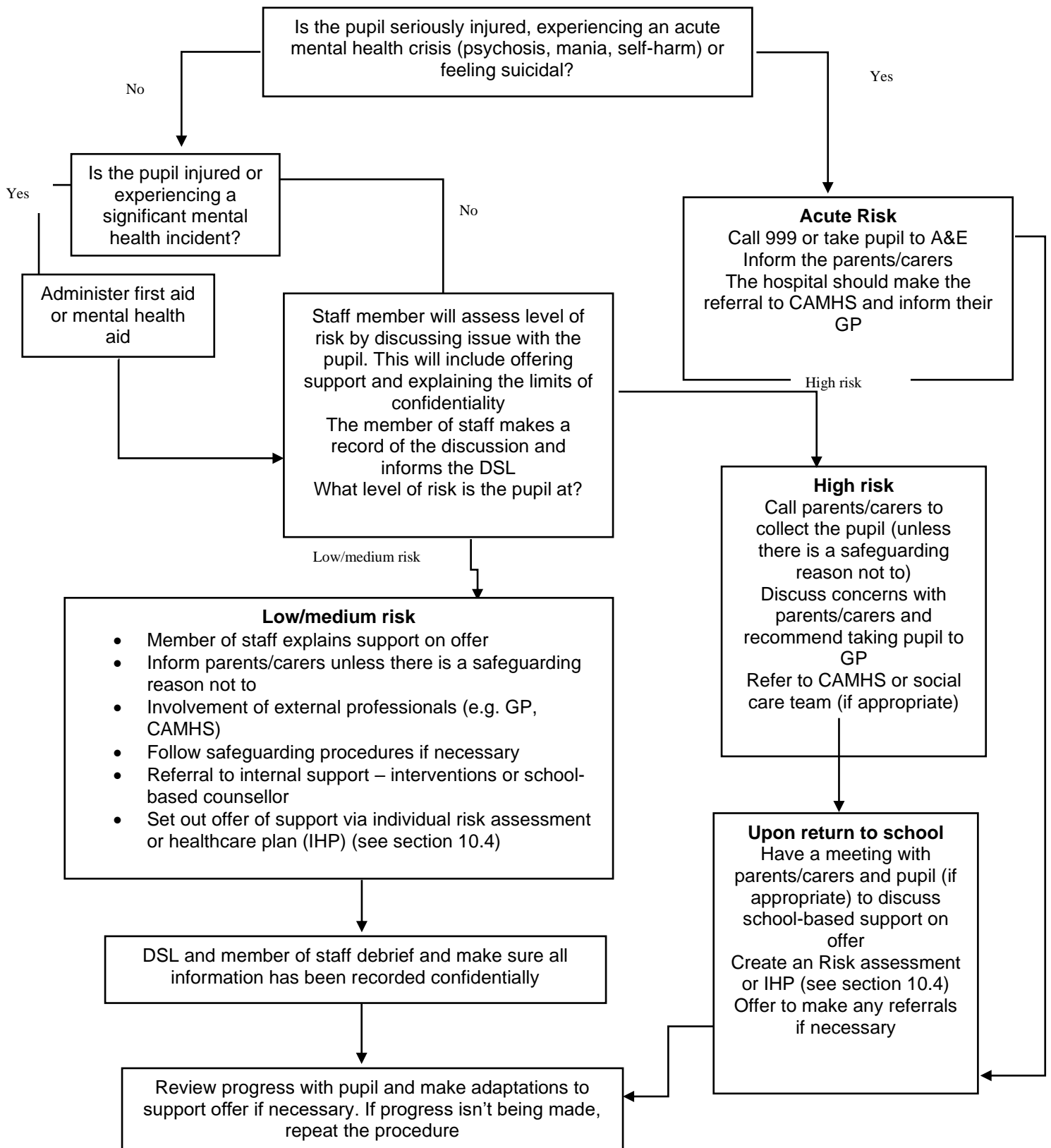
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- Articles 3 and 23 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Roles and responsibilities

All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across our school and for understanding risk factors. If any members of staff are concerned about a child's mental health or wellbeing, they should inform the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and/or the deputy safeguarding leads.

Certain members of staff have extra duties to lead on mental health and wellbeing in school. These members of staff form the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team and includes; Scott Roche (Senior Mental Health Lead), Victoria Bryant (PSHE Lead), Stefanie Eastment (Mental Health First Aid) and Carys Golding (Children & Young People's Mental Health). The Attendance leads and members of the safeguarding team would also be involved at a higher level as necessary.

Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis



Warning signs

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

Changes in:

- Mood or energy level
- Eating or sleeping patterns
- Attitude in lessons or academic attainment
- Level of personal hygiene
- Social isolation
- Poor attendance or punctuality
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, worthlessness or feeling like a failure
- Abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Rapid weight loss or gain
- 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 child 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 child's emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to find out why they are feeling that way or offering advice.

Staff will always follow our school's safeguarding policy and pass on all concerns to the DSL or deputy DSLs. All disclosures are recorded onto the safeguard system, our confidential child protection records.

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 will 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 child'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 child in question

Staff should always share disclosures with at least one appropriate colleague. This will usually be the safeguarding team or our mental health and wellbeing team. If 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 child with a third party, the member of staff will discuss it with the child 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 child to share their information, but the safety of the child comes first.

Parents/carers will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case the child protection 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 safeguarding team/mental health and wellbeing team
4. Member of staff will attempt to get the child's consent to share – if no consent is given, explain to the pupil who the information will be shared with and why
5. Member of staff will record the disclosure and share the information with the chosen elected member of staff
6. The DSL/deputy DSLs 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

Supporting children

Baseline support for all children

As part of our school's commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all children, our school offers support to all children by:

- › Raising awareness of mental health during assemblies, PSHE lessons and mental health awareness week
- › Signposting all parents to sources of online support on our school website
- › Having open discussions about mental health during PSHE lessons
- › Using feelings boxes and open door policy in each classroom to provide children with the chance to provide feedback on any elements of our school that is negatively impacting their mental health
- › Monitoring all children's mental health through assessments, e.g. a strengths and difficulties questionnaire, pupil progress meetings, parents evenings, regular contact between teachers and parents
- › Appointing a senior mental health lead with a strategic oversight of our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- › Offering pastoral support, e.g. through SLT, Sunshine Nurture base, interventions
- › Making classrooms a safe space to discuss mental health and wellbeing through interventions such as:
 - Feelings Boxes
 - Circle time

Assessing what further support is needed

If a pupil is identified as having a mental health need, Stefanie Eastment, our family support worker will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to assessing the support our school can provide, further to the baseline support detailed above.

Our school will offer support in cycles of:

- › Assessing what the child'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 child 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:

- Nurture groups
- Reduced timetable
- Sunshine Nurture Base
- Play Therapy

Individual healthcare plans (IHPs)/Risk Assessments

A child will be offered an individual healthcare plan (IHP) if they have a diagnosed mental health need or it is recommended by a medical practitioner to have one. A risk assessment can either accompany the health care plan or provide support in the absence of a diagnosed need.

IHPs and risk assessments are written in collaboration with the child (if appropriate), their parent/carer, and any other relevant professionals.

The pupil's IHP/Risk assessment will contain the following details:

- The mental health issue (and its triggers, signs, symptoms and treatments)
- The pupil's needs resulting from the condition
- Specific support for the pupil's educational, social and emotional needs i.e. preventative actions
- The level of support needed
- Who will provide the support
- Who in our school needs to be aware of the child's condition
- What to do in an emergency

Making external referrals

If a child's needs cannot be met by the internal offer our school provides, our school will make, or encourage parents/carers to make, a referral for external support.

A child could be referred to:

- Their GP or a paediatrician
- CAMHS
- Mental health charities (e.g. [Samaritans](#), [Mind](#), [Young Minds](#), [Kooth](#), [Papyrus](#))
- Local counselling services

Supporting and collaborating with parents/carers

We will work with parents/carers to support children's 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 children's 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/carer forums)

- Keeping parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their child is learning about in PSHE, and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home
- Promoting Mental Health awareness i.e. Mental health awareness week

When informing parents/carers about any mental health concerns we have about their child, we will endeavour to do this face-to-face.

These meetings can be difficult, so our school will ensure that parents/carers 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 the child's safeguarding record.

If appropriate, an individual healthcare plan (IHP) will be created in collaboration with parents/carers as above.

Supporting peers

Watching a friend experience poor mental health can be very challenging for children. Children may also be at risk of learning and developing unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. We will offer support to all children 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 to sources of external support

Signposting

Sources of support are displayed around our school and links can be found on our school website to give children and parents/carers awareness of how they can get help.

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Team will be available to provide further information to children and parents/carers if they want to learn more about what support is available.

If relevant and important information is received by the school, we will send it to parents/carers via our normal school communication channels such as emails and newsletter.

Whole school approach to promoting mental health awareness

Mental health is taught in PSHE

We follow the PSHE Association Guidance teaching mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Children are taught to:

- Develop healthy coping strategies
- Challenge misconceptions around mental health
- Understand their own emotional state
- Keep themselves safe

For more information, see our PSHE curriculum which can be found on the school website.

Creating a positive atmosphere around mental health

Staff will create an open culture around mental health by:

- Discussing mental health with children in order to break down stigma
- Encouraging children to disclose when their mental health is deteriorating
- Undertaking children's surveys to obtain views

Training

All staff will be offered training so they:

- Have a good understanding of what children's mental health needs are
- Know how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health
- Know a clear process to follow if they identify a child in need of help

Support for staff

We recognise that supporting a child experiencing poor mental health can affect that staff member's own mental health and wellbeing. To help with this we will:

- Treat mental health concerns seriously
- Offer staff supervision sessions, if requested
- Support staff experiencing poor mental health themselves
- Create a pleasant and supportive work environment
- Offer an employee assistance programme i.e. HR support, Occupational health, workload adjustments, phased returns to work etc

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the named responsible staff annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by our link trustees.