



## **Mental Health Policy**

### **September 2020**

Date of Policy	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2020
Review Date	July 2022
SLT Link	Pastoral Support Manager
Governing Body Link	Safeguarding Governor

We believe that all children and young people should have the same protection regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise the additional needs of children from minority ethnic groups and disabled children and the barriers they may face, especially around communication.

Signature.....Date:.....

Headteacher

## **SCHOOL ETHOS AND VALUES**

Our Christian values are at the heart of the ethos of the school and through these we grow individually and as a community. The Story of the Good Samaritan underpins our 7 core values of:

- Honesty
- Forgiveness
- Empathy
- Courage
- Resilience
- Kindness
- Respect

These core values underpin our policies, procedures and the way we treat one another in our community.

### **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

At Sexey's School, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our students and staff.

Our culture is supportive, caring, and respectful. We encourage students to be open and we want each student to have their voice heard. We know that everyone experiences different life challenges, and that each of us may need help to cope with them sometimes. We understand that anyone and everyone may need additional emotional support. At Sexey's School, positive mental health is everybody's responsibility. We all have a role to play.

### **2. POLICY SCOPE**

This policy is a guide to all staff, including teachers, governors, and non-teaching staff. It outlines our approach to promoting student mental health and wellbeing. It should be read and understood alongside our other relevant school policies including Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies and the Behaviour and Rewards policy.

### **3. POLICY AIMS**

The aim of our policy is to demonstrate our commitment to the mental health of our staff and students.

**At our Sexey's School, we will always:**

- Help children to understand their emotions and experiences better.
- Ensure our students feel comfortable sharing any concerns and worries.
- Help children to form and maintain relationships.
- Encourage children to be confident and help to promote their self-esteem.
- Help children to develop resilience and ways of coping with setbacks.

**We will always promote a healthy environment by:**

- Promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all students and staff.
- Celebrating both academic and non-academic achievements.
- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging and community.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth and to reflect.
- Promoting our students' voices and giving them the opportunity to participate in decision making.
- Celebrating each student for who they are and making every student feel valued and respected.
- Adopting a whole school approach to mental health and providing support to any student that needs it.
- Raising awareness amongst staff and students about mental health issues and their signs and symptoms through Assemblies, PSHE and Tutor Activities.
- Enabling staff to respond to early warning signs of mental-ill health in students.
- Supporting staff who are struggling with their mental health.

#### **4. KEY STAFF MEMBERS**

All staff members have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students and each other. However, certain staff members have a specific role in the process. These are:

- Our Designated Safeguarding Officer and Deputy
- Assistant Head – Pastoral
- Pastoral Support Manager
- Pastoral Support Assistants
- Heads of Year
- SENDCo

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of a student, then in the first instance they should speak to: Mrs Wilson (Pastoral Support Manager)

If a child presents a medical emergency then relevant procedures will be followed, including involving the emergency services.

#### **5. TEACHING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH**

Our PHSE curriculum is developed to give students the skills, knowledge, and understanding they need to keep themselves mentally healthy. This includes resilience techniques and training. This is supported through assemblies and the use of external speakers.

We will regularly review our PHSE curriculum and lesson content to ensure that they're meeting the aims outlined in this policy. We'll also implement this into our curriculum at all stages to provide students with strategies to help keep them mentally well.

## **6. SUPPORT AT SCHOOL AND IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY**

We have a range of support available in school for any students struggling including :

- Peer Mentors
- ELSA
- Thrive
- Mindfulness Coaching
- School Counsellor
- Wellbeing Groups
- Health and Wellbeing Practitioner in the Health Centre

In addition to this we have strong links with the local GP and CAMHS services based in both Yeovil and Wells. The school website has details for students and parents about external agencies and charities that can also offer help and support.

## **7. SIGNPOSTING**

We will ensure that all staff, students, and parents are aware of the support that's available in our school for mental health. This includes how to access further support, both inside and outside of school hours. We will ensure this information is accessible through the website and through regular safeguarding newsletters to Parents.

## **8. IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND WARNING SIGNS**

All of our staff will be trained in how to recognise warning signs of common mental health problems. This means that they will be able to offer help and support to students who need it, when they need it. These warning signs will always be taken seriously and staff who notice any of these signs will communicate their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Officer as appropriate.

Staff will be able to identify a range of behaviour and physical changes, including:

- Physical signs of harm.
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits.
- Increased isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in mood.
- Talking and/or joking about self-harm and/or suicide.
- Drug and alcohol abuse.
- Feelings of failure, uselessness, and loss of hope.
- Secretive behaviour.
- Clothing unsuitable for the time of year, e.g. a large winter coat in summer.
- Negative behaviour patterns, e.g. disruption. Staff will also be able to identify a range of issues, including:
- Attendance and absenteeism.
- Punctuality and lateness.
- Changes in educational attainment and attitude towards education.
- Family and relationship problems.

Finally, staff will be well placed to identify any additional needs arising from difficulties that may impact a child's mental health and wellbeing, such as bereavement and health difficulties.

## **9. MANAGING DISCLOSURES**

If a student discloses concerns about themselves or a friend, to any member of staff, then all staff will respond in a calm, supportive, and non-judgemental manner. All disclosures will be recorded confidentially and only shared with the appropriate authorities if it's necessary to keep the child safe, in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

## **10. WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH**

We take a whole school approach towards the mental health of our students. This means working with parents and carers and with other agencies and partners, where necessary.

## **11. WORKING WITH PARENTS AND CARERS**

We aim to support parents as much as possible. This means keeping them informed about their child and offering our support at all times. To support Parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing that we have in our school.
- Share and allow parents to access further support.
- Ensure that parents are aware of who to talk to if they have any concerns about their child.
- Give parents guidance about how they can support their child's/children's positive mental health. • Ensure this policy is easily accessible to parents.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health training our school staff receive and how mental health is covered in our school curriculum.

## **12. WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND PARTNERS**

As part of our whole school approach, we will also work with other agencies to support our students' emotional health and wellbeing. This might include liaising with:

- The school nurse.
- Paediatricians.
- CAMHS.
- Counselling services.
- Therapists.
- Family support workers.
- Behavioural support worker

## **13. SUPPORTING PEERS**

We understand that, when a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their peers. In response to this, we will consider, on a case by case basis, any peers that may need additional support.

We will provide support in a one-on-one or group setting. These sessions will be guided by the student, but they will discuss how peers can help, how peers can access support themselves, and healthy ways of coping with any emotions they might be feeling.

#### **14. PEER MENTORS**

Students who volunteer to be Peer Mentors will be appropriately trained and supervised and will be able to recognise when a Peer may need additional help or support and help them to access it in school through the Pastoral Support Team.

#### **15. TRAINING**

All staff will receive regular training in child mental health so that they can recognise and respond to mental health issues. This will form part of their regular safeguarding training and is a requirement to keep children safe. Training records will be held in staff files.

We will post all relevant information, and additional information, on our school website so staff can learn more about child mental health. We will consider additional training opportunities for staff and we will support additional CPD throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with pupils.

#### **16. POLICY REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Pastoral Support Manager. This is so that it remains up to date, useful, and relevant. We will also regularly review it in accordance with local and national policy changes