

St John's Highbury Vale CE Primary School



'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me' Philippians 4:13

Pupil Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Ratified: July 2026

Review Date: July 2027

At the heart of our school vision is a desire for an authentic and life-giving relationship with ourselves, one another, our world, and with God. We believe that it is through Christ who gives us the strength, all can achieve within a learning environment where every child is valued as a unique individual created in the image of God, and where teaching and learning is of consistently high standard.

STJHV Statement of Intent

St John's Highbury Vale in Islington is committed to providing a nurturing and inspiring environment where every child is empowered to reach their full potential. Grounded in our Christian ethos and guided by our values, we strive to create a vibrant and dynamic educational experience that prepares our pupils to lead fulfilling lives and contribute positively to society.

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1. Aims

At St John's Highbury Vale CE Primary School, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing for all pupils. This policy aims to promote early identification, intervention and support, ensuring mental health is embedded within safeguarding, inclusion and personal development.

This policy should be read alongside:

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

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy was written with regard to:

This policy has been developed with reference to: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025; Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023; Children Act 1989 and 2004; Education Act 2002; Children and Families Act 2014; SEND Code of Practice (2015); Equality Act 2010; Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR; Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Regulations 2019; DfE Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools guidance; UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

3. 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 pupil's mental health or wellbeing, they should inform Petra Slater, the designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

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

Hasina Khan – Acting Head Teacher

Petra Slater - Assistant Head Teacher

Clare Thomson - Family Support Advisor

4. Vulnerable Groups

Particular attention will be given to pupils with SEND, Children in Care, Previously Looked After Children, young carers, pupils eligible for Pupil Premium, pupils experiencing bereavement, domestic abuse, safeguarding concerns or persistent absence.

5. Attendance and Mental Health

The school recognises the strong relationship between emotional wellbeing and attendance. Attendance concerns linked to wellbeing will be addressed through early intervention, family engagement and multi-agency support.

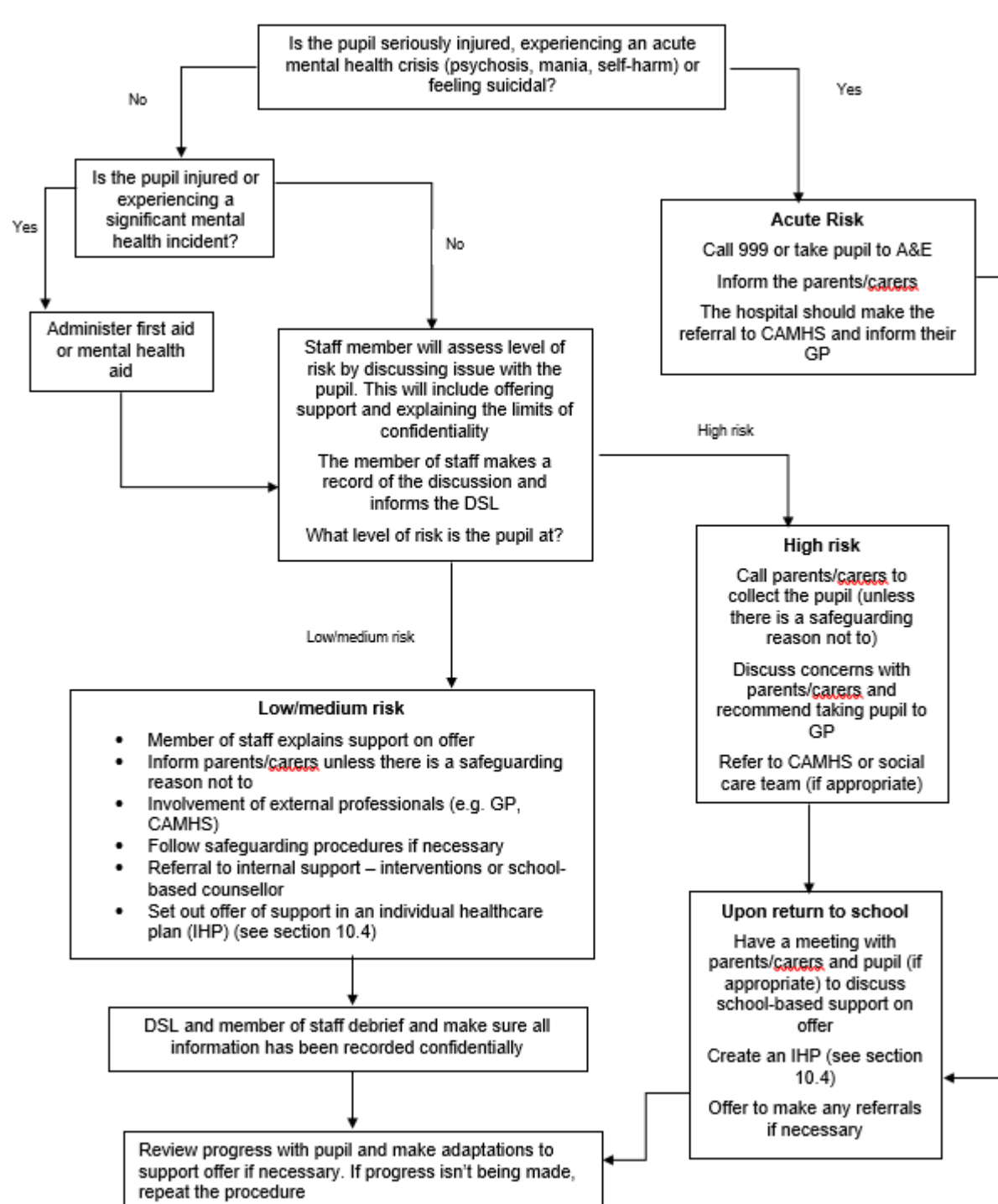
6. Mental Health and SEND

Mental health needs will be considered alongside SEND support plans, EHCPs, behaviour plans, attendance plans and safeguarding arrangements. The SENDCo and Mental Health Lead will work collaboratively.

7. Early Help

The school will identify concerns early and may initiate Early Help assessments and multi-agency support where appropriate.

8. Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis



9. 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
 - 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

10. 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 our school's safeguarding policy and pass on all concerns to the DSL or mental health lead. All disclosures are recorded and stored in the pupil's confidential child protection file.

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

11. 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 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 1 appropriate colleague. This will usually be the DSL/mental health lead. 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 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/carers will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case the safeguarding policy will be followed.

11.1 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/mental health lead – delete as appropriate]
4. Member of staff will attempt to get the pupil'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/mental health lead will inform the parent/carer
7. Any other relevant members of staff or external professionals will be informed on a need-to-know basis

12. Supporting pupils

12.1 Baseline support for all pupils

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

- Raising awareness of mental health during assemblies, PSHE and mental health awareness week
- Signposting all pupils to sources of online support on our school website
- Having open discussions about mental health during lessons
- Providing pupils with avenues to provide feedback on any elements of our school that is negatively impacting their mental health
- Monitoring all pupils' mental health through assessments, e.g. a strengths and difficulties questionnaire
- Offering pastoral support
- Making classrooms a safe space to discuss mental health and wellbeing through interventions such as:
 - Worry boxes/tell me anything box
 - PSHE lessons
 - pupil voice
 - working with parents.
 - Meaningful mind information box

12.2 Assessing what further support is needed

If a pupil is identified as having a mental health need, the DSL will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to assessing the support our school can provide, further to the baseline support detailed above in section 8.1.

Our school will offer support in cycles of:

- 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

12.3 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:

- Nurture groups
- Reduced timetable
- Talking art therapy
- Art therapy
- Zones of regulation
- CAMHS clinicians supporting key stakeholders
- meaningful minds

12.4 Making external referrals

If a pupil'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 pupil could be referred to:

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

13. Supporting and collaborating with parents/carers

We will work with parents/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/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

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 pupil's confidential record.

If appropriate, an individual healthcare plan (IHP) will be created in collaboration with parents/carers (see section 10.4).

14. Supporting peers

Watching a friend experience poor mental health can be very 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 to sources of external support

15. Signposting

Sources of support are displayed around our school and linked to on our school website, so pupils and parents/carers are aware of how they can get help.

- The DSL will be available to provide further information to pupils and parents/carers if they want to learn more about what support is available.
- Visible Signposting Around School
- Posters in key areas (e.g. classrooms, corridors, toilets, staffroom) with information about internal and external mental health support, including names and photos of key staff
- Pupil-friendly language and visuals to make messages accessible to all ages and needs.
- Assemblies and PSHE Lessons
- Whole-school and class-based sessions that focus on mental health awareness, wellbeing strategies, and how to seek help.
- Discussion of mental health into the PSHE curriculum to normalise talking about feelings and support options.
- Staff Training and Briefings
- Regular updates on mental health policies, referral processes, and local services.
- Staff model open, supportive conversations about wellbeing to foster a culture of trust and care.
- Pupil Voice and Peer Support
- Parental Engagement
- Information through newsletters, the school website, and parent workshops about how the school supports mental health and how families can access help.
- Clear guidance on who parents can contact within school if they are concerned about their child.
- School website with information about wellbeing resources, self-help tools, and local support services.

16. Whole school approach to promoting mental health awareness

16.1 Mental health is taught in PSHE

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

Pupils 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 . <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Glmb9fYdnJjR65SgJ8IHk-2nbnRSrEhb/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=102179715921064430835&rtpof=true&sd=true>

16.2 Creating a positive atmosphere around mental health

Staff will create an open culture around mental health by:

- Discussing mental health with pupils in order to break down stigma
- Encouraging pupils to disclose when their mental health is deteriorating

17. Training

All staff will be offered training so 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

18. Support for staff

We recognise that supporting a pupil 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
- Support staff experiencing poor mental health themselves
- Create a pleasant and supportive work environment
- Offer an employee assistance programme

19. Monitoring arrangements

The effectiveness of this policy will be evaluated through pupil voice, attendance data, behaviour data, safeguarding information, intervention outcomes, parent feedback and staff surveys. Findings will be reported to governors and used to inform school improvement planning.

20. Intended Impact

Pupils will feel safe, valued and listened to; barriers to learning will be reduced; attendance and engagement will improve; staff will be confident in recognising concerns; and mental health will be embedded within the school's safeguarding and inclusion culture.

