DIOCESE OF CHICHESTER ACADEMY TRUST

Children's Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy

October 2023

Newick of School

Church England Primary

Children's Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy

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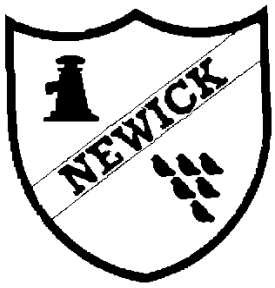
Type of Policy	*Tick* ✓
DCAT Statutory Policy	
DCAT Non-statutory Policy	✓
DCAT Model Optional Policy	
Academy Policy	
Local Authority Policy	

Children's Wellbeing Policy



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'Be courageous, be strong;
Do everything in love'

Date of last review: September 2024
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Introduction

Our **vision** for our Trust is we exist to:

Help every child achieve their God-given potential

Our **aims** are clear. We aim to be a Trust in which:

Developing the whole child means pupils achieve and maximise their potential

Continued development of staff is valued and improves education for young people

All schools are improving and perform above national expectations

The distinct Christian identity of each academy develops and is celebrated

Our work as a Trust is underpinned by shared **values**. They are taken from the Church of England's vision for Education and guide the work of Trust Centre team. They are:

Aspiration
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me
(Philippians 4 vs 13).

Wisdom
Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise
(Proverbs 19 vs 20)

Respect
So in everything do to others what you would have them do to you
(Matthew 7 vs 12)

Our vision of helping every child achieve their God-given potential is aligned with the Church of England's vision for education and is underpinned by the Bible verse from John: *I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

Newick Vision

At Newick CE Primary School children are at the heart of every action and decision we undertake. Teaching our pupils our four key WICK values enables them to carry the flame of love and shine bright in all they do. Our four key values are:

The WICK values are Wisdom, Independence, Creativity and Kindness.

1. Policy Aims

The purpose of this policy is to set out:

- What we mean by wellbeing and positive mental health
- How we promote wellbeing across DCAT
- Who supports mental health and wellbeing in our schools
- How we promote children's positive mental health
- How we identify and support children with mental health needs
- How we support staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs
- Further advice and support.

2. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Children's Wellbeing and Mental Health policy is on academy websites and hard copies are available to parents and carers from the academy office. All mental health professionals are given a copy before they begin working with the academy as well as external agencies involved in our mental health work.

The policy is monitored at an annual review meeting led by the Designated Safeguarding Lead – Faye Lawrence - and involves staff with a responsibility for mental health, including specialist services supporting the academy and trustees.

3. Wellbeing and Mental Health at DCAT

Having 'good' mental health means many things to many people; but most people understand that it is about having a range of skills and resilience to cope with stress and change, to have self-belief and self-worth and engage in purposeful and meaningful activities. An individual that has good mental health feels safe, valued and comfortable with their identity. (Meek at al, 2020).
But this is easier said than done; especially for children and young people in society. In a recent survey by Young Minds, they found:

- 1 in 6 children aged five to 16 were identified as having a probable mental health problem in July 2020.
- Less than 1 in 3 young people with a mental health condition get access to NHS care and treatment.
- 80% of young people with mental health needs agree that the Covid-19 pandemic has made their mental health worse. (Young Minds, 2022)

At DCAT, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community and we recognise how important all aspects of health - social, emotional, mental and physical - are to our children's lives. We also know how learning and achievement can be dramatically affected if any one of those elements is impacted in some way.

We recognise that all children go through ups and downs during their school career and some face significant life events. Our role in our schools is to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress and that they are supported to reach their potential or to access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain their

wellbeing, understand what affects their mental health, support them to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and ensure they know where they can get help and support.

4. DCAT Approach to promoting positive mental health

Vision

We will cultivate an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of wellbeing and mental health and ensures that everyone that needs support receives it.

Principles

- Embed a framework that includes pledges, policies, strategies and training that supports staff, children, parents and carers with wellbeing and mental health
- Help children to support each other and seek help when they need it.
- Develop the whole child and their character strengths through thoughtful and varied enrichment activities and a character curriculum
- Teach children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
- Early identification of children who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers to support them and their children.
- Support and train staff to develop their skills and nurture their own wellbeing

We aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of mental health and wellbeing.

5. Staff Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health and wellbeing in our schools. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff

All of DCAT staff are trained to understand the possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems such as: physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They should also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, effective communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of belonging and their ability to recognise, name and express their feelings.

Mental Health Leads

The (Senior) Mental Health Lead can do some **or** all of the following:

- leads and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing;
- leads on PSHE teaching about mental health;
- provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates;
- is the first point of contact with mental health services and makes individual referrals to them.

At Newick CE Primary the Senior Mental Health Lead is Faye Lawrence, Headteacher (qaulified March 2024). You can read our Newick Mental Health Statement and Policy here: https://www.newickschool.co.uk/Wider-Curriculum/Mental-Health-Wellbeing/

Other staff

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment potential with advice or input from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to children with mental health needs and their families across our schools. These include our Designated Safeguarding Leads, SENDCos, School nurses, Educational Psychologists, Counsellors, play / art / music therapists and other external organisations.

6. Promoting Children's Positive mental health

We believe our schools have a key role in promoting children's positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our schools have developed a range of strategies and approaches including:

Pupil-led activities

- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health.
- Peer mediation and mentoring – children working together to solve problems and planned sessions where identified adults mentor a designated child
- Lunchtime groups supporting younger children during the break
- Transition programmes
- Worry boxes or a similar mechanism where children can anonymously share worries or concerns in class

Teacher-led activities

- Displays promoting positive mental health and signposting support
- Small group therapeutic activities
- Nurture groups
- Talkabout – a small group intervention to improve children's communication skills around turn taking, dealing with issues, resolving conflict.
- Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing

- PSHE - we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help children to be more resilient, understand about mental health and be less affected by the stigma of mental health problems.

7. Identifying, referring and supporting children with mental health needs

7.1 Our approach

- Provide a safe environment to enable children to express themselves and be listened to.
- Ensure the welfare and safety of children are paramount.
- Identify appropriate support for children based on their needs.
- Involve parents and carers when their child needs support.
- Involve children's views and feelings in the care and support they have.
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with children and keep parents and carers updated.

7.2 Early Identification

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- SDQ (Strengths/ Difficulty Questionnaires).
- Analysing behaviour and exclusions.
- Visits to the medical room/school nurse.
- Attendance and punctuality.
- Using Boxall Profiles to identify children who need support.
- Staff report concerns about individual children to the relevant lead persons.
- Worry boxes in each class for children to raise concerns which are checked by the Class Teachers and Mental Health Leads (these are anonymous but give an indication of needs in a particular class regularly).
- Pupil Progress Review meetings termly.
- Regular meetings or supervision for staff to raise concerns.
- A parental information and health questionnaire on entry to the School.
- Gathering information from a previous school at transfer.
- Parental meetings in EYFS.
- Enabling children to raise concerns to any member of staff.
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns to any member of staff.

All staff in the academies have had training on the protective and risk factors types of mental health needs and signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health problems. Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the Mental Health Lead or the SENDCO. These signs might include:

- Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits.

- Falling academic achievement.
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide.
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope.
- Secretive behaviour.
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism.
- Not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE.
- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather.
- Drugs or alcohol misuse.
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.

Staff are aware that mental health needs, such as anxiety, might appear as non-compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development.
If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm, then the School's child protection procedures are followed. If there is a medical emergency, then the School's procedures for medical emergencies are followed.

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgmental to children who disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of our children is paramount, and staff listen rather than advise.

Staff make it clear to children that the concern will be shared with the DSL Team and recorded, in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil.
All disclosures are recorded and held on the pupil's confidential file, including date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps.

7.3 Assessment, Interventions and Support

All concerns are reported to the DSL Team and recorded. We then implement our assessment system, which is based on levels of need to ensure that children get the support they need, either from within the academy or from an external specialist service. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating.

7.4 Levels of Need

The level of need is based on discussions at the regular Welfare, Inclusion and Behaviour Panel (WIB) with key members of staff and involves parents and children. We have the following:

- High
- Some
- Low

7.5 Evidence-based Intervention and Support

The kinds of intervention and support provided will be decided in consultation with key members of staff, parents and children

7.6 Monitoring

All children needing targeted individualised support will have an Individual Learning Plan and/or Risk Reduction Plan drawn up setting out: the needs of the children, how the pupil will be supported, actions to provide that support and any special requirements.
Children and parents/carers will be involved in the plan. The plan and interventions are monitored, reviewed and evaluated to assess the impact e.g. through a pre and post SDQ and if needed a different kind of support can be provided.

Please see appendix 1 – levels of need

Children are informed that the Headteacher is available when a pupil is dissatisfied with the level of care and support.

7.7 Support for friends

We recognise that when a pupil is experiencing mental health problems it can be challenging for their friends, who often want to help them but are not sure the best thing to do and can also be emotionally affected. In the case of eating disorders and self-harm, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping strategies from each other, and we will consider on a case by case basis what support might be appropriate including one to one and group support.

We will involve the pupil who is suffering and their parents and consider what is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told, how they can best support, things they should avoid doing/saying which may inadvertently cause upset and warning signs that their friend needs help.
We will also make information available about where and how to access information and support for themselves and healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling.
Support for children after inpatient treatment

We recognise that some children will need ongoing support and the SENDCo may meet with children on a regular basis. We are careful not to "label" children with diagnoses without prior and sensitive consultation with family/carers and other relevant professionals.
We have a duty of care to support children and will seek advice from medical staff and mental health professionals on the best way to support children. We will carry out a risk assessment and produce an Individual Learning Plan to support children to re-integrate successfully back to school.
When a child leaves an inpatient provision and is transitioning back to school, we discuss what needs to happen so the transition will be smooth and positive.

7.8 Working with specialist services

In some cases, a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, self-harm and eating disorders.
We have access to a range of specialist services and during the support will have regular contact with the service to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the child's Individual Care Plan.

School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the relevant SLT lead or the SENDCO following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents and carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the pupil and parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	Accessed through school, GP or self-referral

Educational Psychologist	Accessed through the Designated Safeguarding Lead or SENDCO

7.9 SEND and mental health

Persistent mental health problems may lead to children having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age. In some cases, the child may benefit from being identified as having a special educational need.

7.10 Involving parents and carers

In promoting mental health, we recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting children who do have mental health needs.

On first entry to the academy, our parents' meeting includes a discussion on the importance of positive mental health for learning. We ask parents to inform us of any mental health needs their child has and any issues that they think might have an impact on their child's mental health and wellbeing, based on a list of risk factors pertaining to the child or family . It is very helpful if parents and carers can share information with the Academy so that we can better support their child from the outset. All information will be treated in confidence.

To support parents and carers we will:

- provide information and websites on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes and have produced leaflets for parents on mental health and resilience, which can be accessed on the school website. The information includes who parents can talk to if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child and where parents can access support for themselves.
- include the mental health topics that are taught in the PSHE curriculum section, on the School website.

When children start school, all parents and carers are given our mental health and resilience leaflet that includes information on how parents can support their child's mental health and where to go for help and support.

7.11 Supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs

We are aware that parents and carers react in different ways to knowing their child has a mental health problem and we will be sensitive and supportive. We also aim to reassure by explaining that mental health problems are common, that the school has experience of working with similar issues and that help and advice are available.

When a concern has been raised, the School will:

- Contact parents and carers and meet with them (In almost all cases, parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as where child protection issues are identified.)
- Offer information to take away and places to seek further information
- Be available for follow up calls.
- Make a record of the meeting.
- Agree an Individual Care Plan including clear next steps.
- Discuss how the parents and carers can support their child.
- Keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions provided.

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger and children may choose to tell their parents and carers themselves. We give children the option of informing their parents and carers about their mental health needs for themselves or of accompanying and supporting them to do so.

We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Our primary concern is the children, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

7.12 Involving children

Every year we train up a group of children as Wellbeing Champions who lead on whole school campaigns on health and wellbeing.

We seek pupils' views about our approach, curriculum and in promoting whole school mental health activities.

We always seek feedback from children who have had support to help improve that support and the services they received.

8. Supporting and training staff

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identify mental health needs early in children and know what to do and where to get help. Our Mental Health Leads are qualified 'mental health first aider' or Senior Mental Health leads and a number of our staff have completed the one-day course on mental health first aid. We have annual updates on child mental health and wellbeing available for all staff with targeted development for those staff that support children with identified mental health needs.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to our overarching Wellbeing Framework and the underpinning SEND and Enrichment strategies as well as the policies on:

- Safeguarding
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs
- Anti-Bullying (policy of each school)
- Behaviour (policy of each school)

The latter is especially important because we know that behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need.

10. Further advice and support

Mental Health and Behaviour in School, 2018

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1069687/Mental_health_and_behaviour_in_schools.pdf

A more recent document of the one below. It gives advice on:

- how to create a whole school culture, including promoting positive mental health?
- understanding the link between mental health and behaviour
- how to identify children with possible mental health problems
- where and how to put in place support, including working with external agencies where required

It also provides links to sources of further support and guidance.

For support on specific mental health needs:

- Anxiety UK www.anxietyuk.org.uk
- OCD UK www.ocduk.org
- Depression Alliance www.depressoinalliance.org
- Eating Disorders www.b-eat.co.uk and www.inourhands.com
- National Self-Harm Network www.nshn.co.uk www.selfharm.co.uk

Suicidal thoughts:

- Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org

For general information and support:

- www.youngminds.org.uk champions young people's mental health and wellbeing
- www.mind.org.uk advice and support on mental health problems
- www.minded.org.uk (e-learning)
- www.time-to-change.org.uk tackles the stigma of mental health
- www.rethink.org challenges attitudes towards mental health

Appendix 1: Levels of need

Highest need	**Examples:** ○ CAMHS-assessment ○ 1:1 or family support or treatment ○ Consultation with academy staff and other agencies ○ DCAT Counsellor ○ Other external agency support If the school, professionals and/or parents conclude that a statutory education, health and care assessment is required, we refer to the SEND policy and SEND School Information Report.
Some need	**Examples:** ○ Access to in school nurture or equivalent group ○ Family support worker (FLO) ○ Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) ○ Art therapy ○ Music therapy ○ Drama therapy ○ Play therapy ○ Educational Psychologist ○ Counsellor ○ Mental Health First Aider, ○ 1:1 intervention ○ Small group intervention,
Low need	**Examples** ○ General support –check ins ○ Class teacher ○ Teaching Assistant ○ Peer to Peer support (Wellbeing Ambassadors/ Buddies/ Peer mediators)