



## **POTT SHRIGLEY CHURCH SCHOOL**

*‘Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you’*

### **Mental Health Policy – Autumn 2024**

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## Policy statement

At Pott Shrigley Church School, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all students, their families, members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows students' voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

## Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining Pott Shrigley's Church School's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

## Policy Aims

We wish to promote a safe and supportive environment and ethos which is conducive to the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school community.

We will:

- Support students to understand their emotions
- Help children to manage change and adversity and develop resilience
- Provide an environment which is conducive to students sharing concerns about themselves or others

We will promote a mentally healthy school environment by:

- Adopting a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Raising awareness in the whole school community of the signs and symptoms of mental health problems
- Supporting staff to manage their own mental health and wellbeing
- Supporting staff to respond swiftly and effectively to any signs of an emerging mental health problem
- Engaging in activities which promote mental health and wellbeing and a sense of belonging in the whole school community
- Celebrating individual differences in students, ensuring all students feel valued and respected
- Valuing and celebrating non-academic achievement

### Key staff members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of students, however key members of staff have specific roles to play as emotionally available adults – collectively known as the co-adventurers:

- Mental Health Lead – Lisa Paton
- Senco / DSL – Anne-Marie Willis
- Teaching Assistants - All
- PSHE Co-ordinator - Kara Williams

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of student, in the first instance they should speak to the Headteacher or mental health lead.

If there is a concern that the student is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed.

If the child presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

### Plan – Do - Reviews

When a pupil has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, it is recommended that a Plan – Do – Review should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Details of the pupil's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- The role of the school and specific staff

## Teaching about mental health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our students need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHEe curriculum. Can we look in detail at the curriculum as I found it hard to pick out the specifics of what we are aiming to cover for MH?

We will follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively.

PSHE Association | Charity and membership body for PSHE education

Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote students' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people.

Additionally, we will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing students who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting students to support any of their friends who are facing challenges. See Section 14 for Supporting Peers

## Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.

Within the school (noticeboards, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletter, website), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure students understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How / when to access it
- Why should they access it
- What is likely to happen next

### Sources or support at school

Wellbeing cards / Next Step Cards

Termly SDQ assessments for all students

Cool connections

Friendship terrace

A trusted adult to talk to – ‘co adventurers.’

### Local Support

In Cheshire East, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support, including the **CAMHS partnership**, a group of providers specialising in children and young people’s mental health wellbeing. These partners deliver accessible support to children, young people and their families, whilst working with professionals to reduce the range of mental health issues through prevention, intervention, training and participation. All staff will be encouraged to familiarise themselves with Cheshire East’s iThrive directory and support available via Chess: [Wellbeing for Education | Chess Hub](#)

### Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of the following warning signs should alert Anne-Marie Willis:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Use of drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope

- Unsuitable in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Avoiding PE
- Lateness to, or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

### Targeted support

We recognise that some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems
- Working closely with Cheshire East Council Children's Services, CAMHS and other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral
- Identifying and assessing in line with the Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT), children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers.

Agree an individual first concerns as the first stage of a 'stepped care' approach

- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective according to the child's needs;
- Ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, including Cheshire East CAMHS, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur;
- Provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should take account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality

- Provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it; and
- The identification, assessment, and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014.
- Access to parenting information and courses via 'In Our place' Online courses for emotional health and wellbeing

### Managing disclosures

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on the student's personal file, including:

- |                                                           |                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| ▪ Date and time of disclosure                             | ▪ Nature of the disclosure & main points |
| ▪ Name of member of staff to whom the disclosure was made | from the conversation                    |
|                                                           | ▪ Agreed next step                       |

This information will be shared with the mental health lead and Safeguarding team.

### Confidentiality

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague – DSL or SMHL. We will tell the child:

- |                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ▪ Who we are going to tell       | ▪ Why we need to tell them      |
| ▪ What we are going to tell them | ▪ When we're going to tell them |

Ideally, consent should be gained from the student first, however, there may be instances when information must be shared, such as students up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a colleague this ensures one single member of staff isn't solely responsible for the student. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Parents must always be informed, but students may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, a timescale of 24 hours is recommended to share this information before the school makes contact with the parents/carers.

If a pupil gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection / safeguarding procedures should be followed.

### Working with parents/carers

We recognise the importance of working with and supporting parents and carers as part of our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. In order to support parents and carers, we will:

- Make the policy, and other sources of information and support about common mental health issues, available in a prominent position on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to contact and how, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child both within the school and externally
- Keep parents and carers informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in RSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home
- Provide opportunities for parents to be involved in any training or other activities which may help them support their child's mental health
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills. Signpost to 'In Our Place' Online courses for emotional health and wellbeing
- Ensuring parents, carers and other family members living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing.



It may be necessary to inform parents or carers of any concerns relating to the mental health of their child. In this event, we will be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents or carers we should consider the following questions (to be adapted on a case by case basis):

- Can we meet with the parents/carers face-to-face?
- Where should the meeting take place – some parents are uncomfortable in school premises so consider a neutral venue if appropriate.
- Who should be present – students, staff, parents etc.?
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?

It may be shocking and upsetting for parents or carers to learn that their child may be experiencing a mental health problem, and we should be prepared for a range of responses, which may include fear, anger or emotional distress during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent or carer time to reflect.

We will highlight further sources of information and share sources of further support aimed specifically at parents and carers – ‘In Our Place’. We will provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow-up meeting or phone call as parents and carers often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child’s confidential record.

### Supporting Peers

When a student is experiencing a mental health issue, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how to do so. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case-by-case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the student who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support their peer
- Things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset

- Warning signs that their friend needs help (e.g. signs of relapse)

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

### Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training to enable them to keep students safe. Annually one twilight inset session will be dedicated to Mental Health and the school offering:

Mental Health Policy / Mental Health Development Plan – short and long term aims

Co-adventurers

Introduction to SDQ

Next Step Cards

Interventions and support

Access to online training via The Solihull Approach. Access code  
WHEATSHEAF\_PRF Cheshire East PRF | Online courses for professionals - Solihull Approach | Parenting

. A nominated member of staff will receive professional Mental Health First Aid training or equivalent.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more students.

### Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is **December 2026**

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of the Headteacher and mental health lead.

Any personnel changes will be implemented immediately.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher (December 2024)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Mental Health Lead (December 2024)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chair of Governors (December 2024)