

Pupil Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy



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Policy Statement

At Ringwood Junior School, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils, parents, carers, staff, governors, and other stakeholders.

Our open culture allows pupils' 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 intended to:

- Provide guidance to school staff (including non-teaching and governors) on Ringwood Junior School's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across all communities in the school
- Inform pupils and parents about the support that they can expect from the school in respect of supporting mental health and wellbeing.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

SEND policy
Behaviour policy
Anti-bullying policy
Safeguarding policy
Child protection policy

Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and pupils.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in pupils.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to pupils with mental health issues and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst pupils and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from the Senior Leadership Team that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff and student welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

Key Staff Members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Pastoral Team
- Designated and Deputy Safeguarding Leads
- SENDCO
- Mental Health Lead

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of student, in the first instance they should speak to the Mental Health Lead (Carly Thornton, Assistant Head and SENCo).

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.

Individual Care Plans

When a student 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 an Individual Care Plan should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the student, parents, and relevant professionals.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

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

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our pupils need to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PHSE curriculum.

We will follow the guidance issued by the Department for Education on Relationships and Sex Education to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively.

[Relationships Education RSE and Health Education.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101422/Relationships_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)

Further information is also found from the PSHE Association here: [Statutory RSHE \(pshe-association.org.uk\)](https://www.pshe-association.org.uk)

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

Additionally, we will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing pupils who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting pupils to support any of

their friends who are facing challenges.

Signposting

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

Within the school and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites), we will share and display relevant information about support arrangements local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure pupils understand:

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

Sources or support at school and in the local community

School Based Support

What it is?	Who it is suitable for?	How is it accessed?	How is this information communicated to pupils?
General information on Mental Health and Well Being	All pupils	Through classroom lessons and assemblies	Assembly programme including weekly Wellbeing Wednesday Assemblies Time in lessons Discussions with pupils
Pastoral check ins / mentoring	Key pupils	Through Pastoral Support Team	Referred by Class teachers /Year Leader/parents and carers
ELSA	Pupils who are showing a wide range of emotional or social difficulties. For example: anxiety, low self-esteem, difficulties with anger etc.	Via SENCO / Year Leader/class teacher/discussions with parents and carers	Targeted approach using a 6-week programme
Counsellor	Pupils who need intensive support	SENCO/Pastoral Team/Year Leader/Class Teacher/Discussions with parents and carers	Targeted approach through weekly sessions, on a 1:1 basis. These sessions are highly confidential.

Appendix 1 also shows the mental health pathways.

Local Support

In Ringwood, there are a range of organisations and groups which school can signpost to and there are additional services offering support, including Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) and CAMHS, these are 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.

- **Solent Mind**
A group that offers support for anyone who needs it, including at Trinity United Church in Ringwood
- **Hampshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)**
An NHS service that helps young people aged 5–18 and their families who are struggling with mental health problems
- **Shout**
A free, confidential, 24/7 text service that provides mental health support for all ages in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight
- **YoungMinds**
A mental health charity that can help you understand how you're feeling, find ways to feel better, or support someone who's struggling
- **Kooth**
A free, anonymous, confidential, online wellbeing service that offers professional support, information, and forums for young people
- **Support Line**
A helpline that provides confidential emotional support to children, young adults, and adults
- **The King's Arms**
A youth provision for young people aged 11–18 that offers mentoring and courses to support self-esteem and tackling anxiety
- **The Mix**
A crisis support service for young people aged 11–25 that offers a free helpline, live one-to-one messenger chat, and email

Other resources include:

- Childline Calm Zone
- Health for Teens
- BEAT
- YGAM
- Papyrus
- OCD UK

- National Autistic Society
- Winston's Wish
- Bullying
- The Sleep Charity

Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should alert the Mental Health Lead.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of include:

- 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
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness, or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- 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 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 work closely with school nurses and their teams in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of school-aged children and are equipped to work at community, family, and individual levels. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating.

We ensure timely and effective identification of pupils 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 Hampshire County Council Children's Services, Hampshire CAMHS and other agencies and services to follow various protocols including assessment and

- referral;
- Identifying and assessing in line with the Hampshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership Threshold of Need Chart to identify 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 Care Plan 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;
- Ensuring young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, including Hampshire CAMHS, so that emotional, social, and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur;
- Providing 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;
- Providing 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.

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 CPOMS including:

- Date
- Name of member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Nature of the disclosure and main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information will be shared with the Mental Health Lead.

Confidentiality

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a pupil to either someone within or outside of the school, then this will be first discussed with the pupil. We will tell them:

- Who we are going to tell
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need 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 pupils 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 is not solely responsible for the pupil. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Parents must always be informed, but pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss the concern. Instances where parents/carers are unable to physically come into school, a phone call will be made to share on the concerns as soon as possible.

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

Whole School Approach

Working with Parents/Carers

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, there are questions to consider first:

- 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 – pupils, staff, parents etc.?
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?

We are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parents to reflect and come to terms with the situation.

Signposting parents to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication should be kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone call might be beneficial at this stage.

Ensure a record of the meeting and points discussed/agree are added to CPOMs and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate.

Supporting parents

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of and have access to promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.)
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills. This may involve providing information or offering small, group-based programmes run by community nurses (such as school nurses and health visitors) or other appropriately trained health or education practitioners

- 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. This will include support to participate in any parenting sessions, by offering a range of times for the sessions or providing help with transport and childcare. We recognise this might involve liaison with family support agencies.

Supporting peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. 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 pupil 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
- 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 pupils safe. A nominated member of staff, Carly Thornton, has received Mental Health First Aid training and they are the Designated Mental Health Lead for the school.

We will host relevant information on our website for staff who wish to learn more about mental health.

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 pupils.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the Mental Health Lead who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

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 Carly Thornton, Mental Health Lead.

Any personnel changes will be implemented immediately.

Appendix 1 – Ringwood Junior School Mental Health and Well-being Pathways

<p>Mild Concerns</p>	<p>If you are experiencing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety that is short term / not wanting to come to school / difficulty in going into some lessons / struggling to stay in lessons • Struggling with friendships • Feeling nervous, irritability, impatience, sadness, feeling overwhelmed Tired, low energy or headaches <p>Talk to: Any member of staff, your Class Teacher, Year Leader, Mental Health Lead</p> <p>They will: Signpost you to support, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Wellbeing Hampshire: https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/publichealth/mentalwellbeinghampshire/childrenandyoungfamilies • Kooth https://www.kooth.com/ • Shout https://giveusashout.org/
<p>Moderate Concerns</p>	<p>If you are experiencing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety that is becoming problematic, appears out of context or disproportionate to the reason why they might be worrying • some episodes of panicking such as getting distressed, racing heart rate, quicker breathing, feeling dizzy or faint, vomiting, shaking • Anger, withdrawal, pervasive sadness, hopelessness, poor concentration, increased fatigue, aches/pains. <p>Talk to: Class Teacher, Year Leader, Mental Health Lead, Mental Health First Aider, SENCo</p> <p>They will: Possibly complete a referral to the Mental Health Support Team and / or offer in school mentoring through the Pastoral Team</p>
<p>Significant Concerns</p>	<p>If you are experiencing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety or episodes of low mood/depression which are severe and enduring, and which cause significant distress and significantly disrupt daily coping such as school, socialising and self-care activities (e.g. sleeping, bathing, eating) • Regular episodes of panicking such as getting distressed, racing heart rate, quicker breathing, feeling dizzy or faint, vomiting, shaking • Isolating self from friends and family, feeling hopeless about future. <p>Talk to: The Mental Health Lead, your Class Teacher, Year Leader</p> <p>They will: Possibly refer to CAMHS or if not serious enough refer to MHST</p>
<p>Always remember to log any safeguarding concerns. In crisis ring 111 or use www.111.nhs.uk. If life is at risk, ring 999</p>	