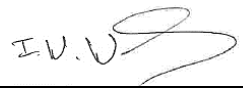
Every Child Matters Academy Trust

Mental Health and Wellbeing policy

Written by:	Mrs G Foster-Wilson	
Approved by Chair of Trustees	Signature	Name
		W.Ward
Last reviewed:	2nd May 2024	
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SCHOOL	**Designated Senior Mental Health Lead**	**CONTACT DETAILS**
Athersley South Primary School	Danielle Grange	01226 284223
Barugh Green Primary School	Charlotte Mahoney	01226 383800
High View Primary Learning Centre	Amy Whittaker/ Stella Robinson	01226 273220
Hoyland Springwood Primary School	Sarah Johnson	01226 743815
Kexborough Primary School	Aimee Warburton	01226 382288
Laithes Primary School	Georgina Fletcher	01226 281255
Ladywood Primary School	Lyndsey Roystone	01709 887750
Sandhill Primary School	Claire McDonald	01226 345030
Wellgate Primary School	Katie Richardson	01226 383739
Wilthorpe Primary School	Claire Griffin	01226 288676
Wombwell Park Street Primary School	Adam Fidment	01226 752029
ECM Academy Trust	Sian Vaughton	s.vaughton@ecmtrust.co.uk

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1. Policy statement

At Every Child Matters we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils, parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders.

This policy was written in consultation with the Headteachers and Senior Mental Health Leads at all ECM schools.

2. Scope

This policy is intended to:

Provide guidance to school staff on our trust's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across all communities in our schools

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:

- Mental Health Strategy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

3. Policy aims

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing across the whole school
- Create a culture of wellbeing and inclusion
- Foster a positive atmosphere in school, where pupils feel able to openly discuss and reflect on their own experiences with mental health
- Allow pupils to participate in forming our approach to mental health by promoting pupil voice
- Spread awareness of the variety of ways mental health issues can manifest
- Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues
- Provide support to staff working with pupils with mental health issues
- Ensure staff are aware of external agencies that may be able to provide additional support
- Provide support and access to resources to pupils experiencing mental ill health alongside their peers, their families and the staff who work with them

4. Legal basis

This policy was written with regard to:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- Articles 3 and 23 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)

5. Roles and responsibilities

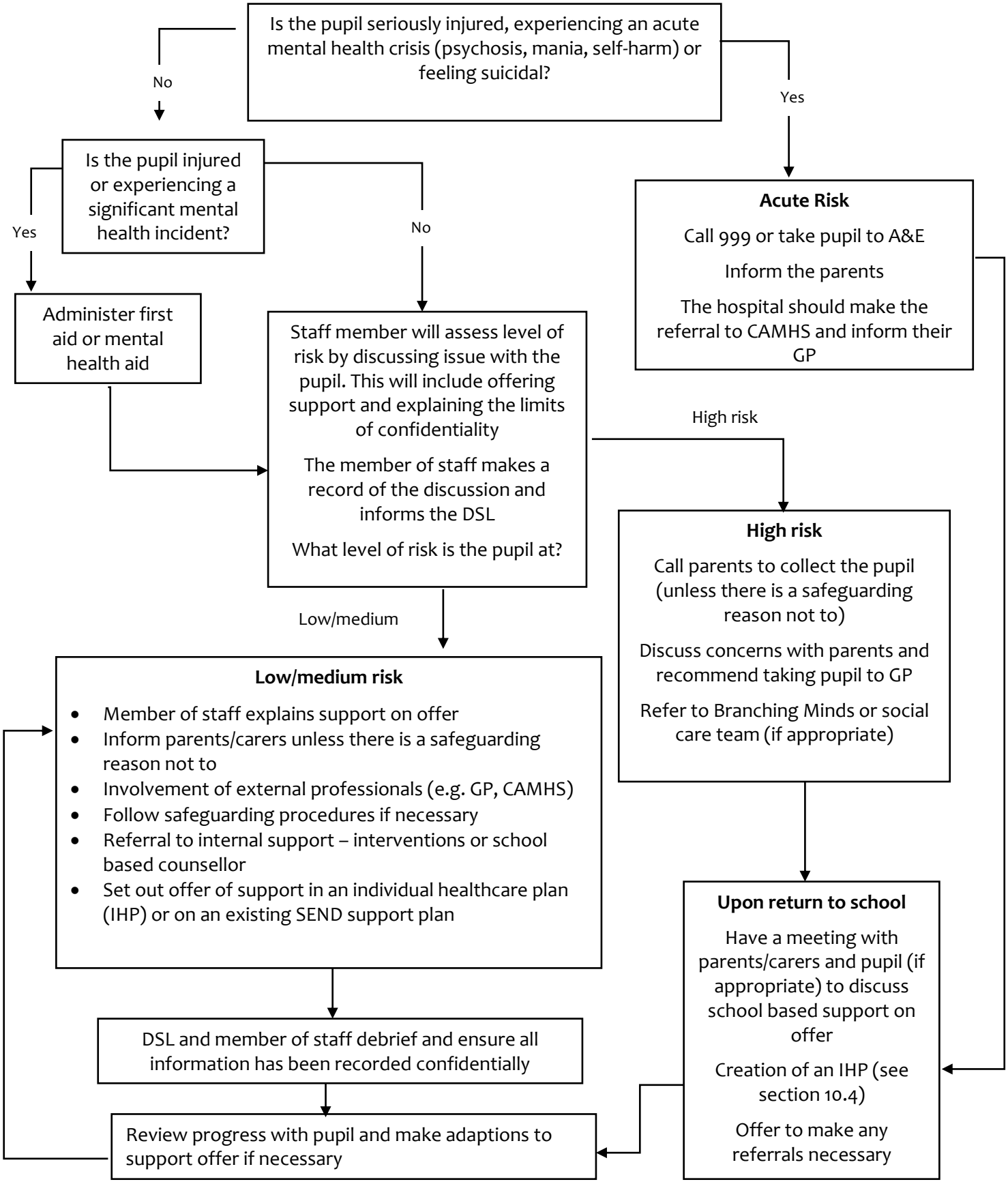
All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across the school and for understanding risk factors. If any members of staff are concerned about a pupil's mental health or wellbeing, they should inform the designated safeguarding lead and the designated senior mental health lead.

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

- Headteacher
- Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)
- Senior mental health lead
- Special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCO)
- Parent support advisor
- Learning mentor / Incredible Me lead (Please delete as appropriate)

The senior mental health lead will have accessed the appropriate accredited training.

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



7. 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
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Changes in attitude in lessons or academic attainment
- Changes in levels 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
- 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

8. 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 the trust's safeguarding policy and pass on all concerns to the designated safeguarding lead and the senior mental health lead. All disclosures are recorded and stored in the pupil's confidential file on CPOMS.

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

9. Confidentiality

Staff should 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:

- Information may need to be shared to keep the child safe
- 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 the DSL and senior 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 will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case the safeguarding policy will be followed.

9.1 Process for managing confidentiality around disclosures

- Pupil makes a disclosure
- Member of staff offers support
- Member of staff explains the issues around confidentiality and rationale for sharing a disclosure with DSL and mental health lead - delete as appropriate
- Member of staff will attempt to get the pupil's consent to share – if no consent is given, explain to the pupil who you will share the information with and explain why you need to do this
- Member of staff will record the disclosure and share the information with the DSL
- The DSL will inform the parent/carer (if appropriate)
- Any other relevant members of staff or external professionals will be informed on a need-to-know basis

10. Supporting pupils

10.1 Baseline support for all pupils

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

- Raising awareness of mental health during assemblies, PSHE lessons and mental health awareness week
- Signposting all pupils to sources of online support on the school website
- Having open discussions about mental health during lessons
- Providing pupils with avenues to provide feedback on any elements of the school that is negatively impacting their mental health
- Monitoring of all pupils' mental health through assessments e.g. a strengths and difficulties questionnaire
- Appointing a senior mental health lead with a strategic oversight of our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Offering pastoral support through trained adults such as Senior mental health leads, learning mentors, Incredible Me! leads, parent support advisors, art therapists, play therapists, counsellors.
- Making classrooms a safe space to discuss mental health and wellbeing through interventions such as Incredible Me!

10.2 Assessing what further support is needed

If a pupil is identified as having a mental health need, the senior mental health lead will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to making an assessment and providing tailored support, further to the provision of the baseline support as detailed in section 10.1. The 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

10.3 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 may include, but is not limited to;

- Incredible Me
- Books Beyond Words

- Emotional check-ins
- Art therapy
- Play therapy
- Self-regulation areas
- Reduced timetable
- Breaks from learning
- Support from external agencies e.g Compass

10.4 Individual healthcare plans (IHPs)

A pupil will be offered an individual healthcare plan (IHP) if they have continuing mental health needs and the involvement of other professionals but are not schools SEND register.

IHPs are written in collaboration with the pupil (if appropriate), their parent/carer, and any other relevant professionals.

The pupil's IHP will contain the following details:

- The mental health issue (and its triggers, signs, symptoms and treatments)
- The pupil's needs resulting from the condition
- Specific support for the pupil's educational, social and emotional needs
- The level of support needed
- Who will provide the support
- Who in the school needs to be aware of the child's condition
- What to do in an emergency

For pupils already on the schools SEND register, this information will be added to the social, emotional and mental health section of their current SEND support plan.

10.5 Making external referrals

If a pupil's needs cannot be met by the internal offer the school provides, the school will make, or encourage parents to make, a referral for external support.

A pupil could be referred to:

- GP or paediatrician
- Branching Minds – CAMHS/Compass Be
- Mental health charities (e.g. Samaritans, Mind, Young Minds, Kooth)
- Local counselling services

11. Supporting and collaborating with parents and carers

We will work with parents and 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 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 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 the school will ensure that parents 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.

12. Supporting peers

Watching a friend experience poor mental health can be extremely 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, both directly and indirectly. We will review the support offered on a case-by-case basis. Support might include providing information about:

- Strategies they can use to support their friends
- Things they should avoid doing/saying
- Warning signs to look out for
- Sources of external support

13. Signposting

Sources of support will be displayed around the school and linked to on the school website, so pupils and parents are aware of how they can get help.

The senior mental health lead will be available to provide further information to pupils and parents/carers if they want to learn more about what support is available.

14. Whole school approach to promoting mental health awareness

14.1 Mental health is taught in PSHE

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

Pupils will be 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.

In addition to this, we use the Incredible Me! intervention to support individuals, groups and whole classes in their emotional wellbeing.

14.2 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 they think their mental health is deteriorating

15. 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

16. Support for staff

The Governing Body, Trust and school senior leaders acknowledge the potential impact that work has on an individual's physical and mental health, and will take steps to promote staff wellbeing as far as reasonably practicable.

This policy accepts the Health and Safety Executive definition of work related stress as "the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them". There is an important distinction between 'reasonable pressures' which stimulate and motivate and 'stress' where an individual feels they are unable to cope with excessive pressures or demands placed upon them.

We take account of the Management Standards developed by the Health and Safety Executive which cover the primary sources of stress at work, and that if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and wellbeing, lower productivity and increased sickness absence. These are:

- **Demands**. Workload, work patterns and anything within the work environment that adds to the demands that staff face, including deadlines, student behaviour and parents.
- **Control**. How much say a staff member has in what they do and how they are able to do their work.
- **Support**. Including the sponsorship and resources provided by the school, and encouragement of leaders, line managers and colleagues.
- **Relationships**. Including how positive working behaviours are promoted to avoid conflict and effectively dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- **Role**. Including the extent to which staff understand their role within the school, how this fits with that of their department or function and the aims of the school and whether leaders ensure they do not have conflicting roles.
- **Change**. Including how well organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated within the school.

We are committed to fostering a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect, where all individuals are treated with fairness and dignity, and can work at their optimum level.

We also recognise that work-related stress has a negative impact on staff wellbeing, and that it can take many forms and so needs to be carefully analysed and addressed at an organisational level.

16.1 We will promote the wellbeing of staff by:

- Creating a working environment where potential work-related stressors are understood and mitigated as far as practically possible through good management practices, effective Human Resources policies and staff development.
- Developing a culture that is open and supportive of people experiencing stress or other forms of mental ill-health.
- Engaging with staff to create constructive and effective working partnerships, both within teams and across the school.
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing through effective health promotion programmes and initiatives.
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own work effectiveness as a means of reducing their own stress and that of their colleagues.

16.2 Headteachers and senior leaders will:

- Quickly and effectively deal with unacceptable behaviour and will take decisive action when issues are brought to their attention.
- Ensure that there is good communication within their team and there are opportunities for individuals to raise concerns about their work.
- Ensure workload is distributed equitably and fairly among their team and that when work is delegated, team members have the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver it.
- Regularly check in with team members, thank and encourage them and offer praise when it is due.
- Manage the underperformance of any individual staff member sensitively.

16.3 Staff will:

- Treat colleagues and others they interact with during the course of their work with fairness, consideration and respect.
- Raise concerns with senior leaders if they feel there are work issues that are causing them stress and having a negative impact on their wellbeing.
- Be liable for their own health and wellbeing as far as is practically possible.
- Take responsibility for working effectively in their assigned roles, supporting others as appropriate and helping to avoid causing stress to their colleagues.

16.4 Arrangements for wellbeing and stress prevention through good management practices will include:

- Having clear job descriptions and person specifications to ensure staff members are clear on what is expected in their role and the right person is recruited where vacancies exist.

- Ensuring training and development procedures are in place so individuals have the necessary skills and competencies to undertake the tasks and duties required of them.

- Ensuring headteachers are aware of those behaviours proven to prevent and reduce staff stress.

- Having effective processes and procedures for:
  - Reward and recognition
  - Managing performance and capability
  - Absence management and return to work
  - Harassment and anti-bullying
  - Seeking staff feedback, including use of anonymous surveys
  - Keeping in touch days for those staff on maternity leave
  - Making suitable adaptations for disability and accessibility

16.5 Support for staff experiencing mental health difficulties

We will;

- Treat mental health concerns seriously

- Offer staff supervision sessions where necessary

- Offer support from trained practitioners following events which affect the whole school community, such as the death of a pupil.

- Make individual referrals to occupational health where appropriate

- Signpost to support available through Westfield Health (funded by school)

Paid services available to all staff following all statutory financial guidance;

- Occupational Health

- Westfield – Employee Assistance Programme

- TURA – Trade Union Representation Agreement

- Dedicated wellbeing CPD

16.6 Support staff working with pupils with poor mental health

We recognise that supporting a pupil experiencing poor mental health can be distressing for staff. To combat this we will:

- Offer staff supervision sessions where necessary
- Ensure access to the appropriate information and/or training to support them in effectively supporting the pupil's mental health needs
- Make referrals to occupational health where appropriate
- Signpost to support available through Westfield Health (funded by school)

17. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually at trust level. At every review, the policy will be approved by the board of trustees.