



Extend Learning
Academies Network

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy - Children

Version:	3.0	
Written by:	HR / Trust Wellbeing Champions	
Reviewed by:	ELAN Board	Date: 14/04/2025
Approved by:	Name: Rosemary Carr Signed by: Rosemary Carr Chair of the Board	Date: 14/04/2025
Adopted by Academies:	Banwell Primary School Bournville Primary School Locking Primary School Mead Vale Primary School Mendip Green Primary School Milton Park Primary School Oldmixon Primary School Walliscote Primary School Windwhistle Primary School	
Review:	2 Years	
Next Review Due By:	May 2027	

Document Control

Document Information

	Information
Document Name	Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy - Children
Document Author	HR / Trust Wellbeing Champions
Document Approval	Head of HR
Document Status	Version 3.0
Publication Date	May 2025
Review Date	May 2027
Distribution	Website/General

Version Control

Version	Issue Date	Amended by	Comments
1.0	May 2021	Head of HR	New Policy
2.0	June 2023	Head of HR/Wellbeing Network	Biennial review – minor updates to roles & responsibilities section and supporting/training staff section.
3.0	April 2025	ID Lead SEND Lead & IP	Biennial review – minor updates to reflect trauma informed approach, relational practice and awareness of the impact of language.

Contents

1. Why mental health and wellbeing is important	4
2. Definition of mental health and wellbeing	4
3. Links to other policies	5
4. A whole school approach to promoting positive mental health	5
5. Roles and Responsibilities	5
6. Supporting children's positive mental health and wellbeing	6
7. Identifying children with mental health needs	7
8. Responding to disclosure	8
9. Providing the right level of support when it's needed	8
10. SEND and mental health	8
11. Involving children	9
12. Supporting and training staff	9
13. Policy review	9
14. Additional sources of information or support	9

1. Why mental health and wellbeing is important

At the Extend Learning Academies Network (ELAN) we strive to foster and support positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school communities and recognise the importance both play in our lives in exactly the same way as physical health.

We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement as well as having an enormous impact on their quality of life and their relationships.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that:

'in order to help their children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy'.

Within ELAN we aspire to provide an extraordinary education that empowers our children and staff to achieve their best, part of which is providing a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience.

For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting children's wellbeing and can help foster a sense of belonging and community.

Within ELAN we all have a part to play 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 positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support. We will continue to work together to build and develop mental resilience in a caring and supportive environment where:

- individuality is embraced
- all children are valued
- children have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- children can talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without fear
- positive mental health and wellbeing is fostered and supported
- bullying is not tolerated

2. Definition of mental health and wellbeing

We endorse the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing:

"a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community"

We understand that mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of poor mental health and we want our children to:

- feel confident in themselves
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others
- cope with the stresses of everyday life
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change
- learn and achieve

- enjoy learning in a safe, open and supportive environment that supports mental health, overall wellbeing and prevents discrimination

3. Links to other policies

This policy is not intended to stand alone and links to our policies on Safeguarding, Medical needs, Anti-bullying, SEND and Equal opportunities and equality.

Links with the school's Behaviour policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need.

4. A whole school approach to promoting positive mental health

ELAN takes a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health which supports children's resilience, happiness, and success, while proactively addressing potential issues before they develop by:

- creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands
- helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it
- helping children to be resilient learners
- teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health
- early identification of children who have mental health needs and collaboratively planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services
- effectively working with parents and carers
- supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Within ELAN we recognise that we all have a responsibility to foster and support positive mental health and to understand and recognise the risk factors. Some children will require additional help and all staff should look out for any early warning signs of potential mental health issues and ensure that children with such needs get the support they need. Examples of possible risk factors that could increase the likelihood of children experiencing mental health issues are:

- physical long-term illness
- growing up around adults who are experiencing mental health issues
- death and loss, including loss of friendships
- change in family circumstances, such as divorce or separation
- bullying.

Staff should also demonstrate an understanding of the impact of positive childhood experiences that may be protective factors against the long term impact of adversity. Supportive relationships with friends and family members, positive experiences at school and in the community can positively impact on, communication, emotional literacy and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and self-esteem.

We recognise that adopting trauma informed approaches and relational practices in schools, will support all children, especially those experiencing mental health issues. Schools can seek advice from external professionals and recognise that some children will need more intensive support at times. This could be provided at school, or via a range of mental health

professionals and organisations that provide support to children and families experiencing mental health issues.

Sources of possible support:

- Senior leadership teams
- ELAN's SEND-Lead and Inclusion Partner
- School designated safeguarding leads
- SENDCOs
- Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- The majority of our schools also have EMHP (Educational Mental Health Practitioners)

6. Supporting children's positive mental health and wellbeing

We believe that all of our schools have a key role to play in promoting children's positive mental health and wellbeing, by supporting such things as:

- positive welcome from school adults at the start of every day so that every child feels held in mind.
- considered use of language in interactions with, and about, children.
- unconditional positive regard – adopting a curious (not furious) approach to unexpected behaviours.
- assemblies to raise awareness of mental health.
- peer mediation and peer mentoring – children working together to solve problems and planned sessions where identified adults mentor a designated child
- a lunchtime group supporting younger children at lunchtime
- enhanced transition programmes to help smooth the transfer to a new year group or setting including secondary schools for Year 6 children
- recognition programmes e.g. praise boxes or similar - a mechanism where children can be praised and celebrated.
- worry boxes - a similar mechanism where children can anonymously share worries or concerns ~~in class~~
- small group activities
- nurturing interactions and nurture groups

Knowledge along with good social and emotional skills-are taught through PSHE, starting in EYFS and developing and building through key stage 1 (KS1) and key stage 2 (KS2). For example:

In EYFS and KS1 children learn such things as:

- how to recognise, name and describe feelings including good and not so good feelings
- simple strategies for managing feelings
- how their behaviour affects other people
- how to cooperate and problem solve
- how to motivate themselves and persevere
- how to calm down
- change and loss and the associated feelings e.g. moving home, losing toys, pets or friends
- who to go to if they are worried
- the types of bullying and teasing, how to resist it and how to get help

In KS2 children learn such things as:

- the things that can positively and negatively affect their wellbeing, including the media

- positive and healthy coping strategies.
- how to describe the range and intensity of their feelings to others, both good and bad
- how to recognise and respond appropriately to a wide range of feelings in others
- understanding that they may experience conflicting emotions and when they might need to listen to their emotions or overcome them
- resilience: how to motivate themselves and bounce back if they fail at something
- how to empathise and be supportive of others
- managing personal change, including transitions (between key stages and schools), loss, separation, divorce and bereavement
- the consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including online bullying, prejudice-based language), as well as how to respond and ask for help if they are victims of this themselves
- the importance of talking to someone and how to get help.

7. Identifying children with mental health needs

ELAN is committed to identifying as early as possible children experiencing mental health issues.

This may be identified in a number of ways including:

- analysis of behaviour and exclusions
- attendance and punctuality patterns
- progress reviews
- information from a previous school for children transferring in
- reported concerns from a member of staff
- reported concerns from parents/ carers

Children experiencing mental health issues may exhibit some of the following:

- fear of change
- perfectionism
- sensory issues
- 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
- reluctance 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

Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the headteacher, the safeguarding lead or the SENDCO

Staff are aware that children experiencing issues such as anxiety, might appear as non-compliant, disruptive or aggressive which could result in differences in attention and arousal

levels (hyper/hypo arousal). This may be related to changes or challenges with the home, 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.

8. Responding to disclosure

In the event that a child discloses a mental health concern either about themselves or a friend, the emotional and physical safety of our children is paramount.

The role of the member of staff is to remain calm, offer support in a non-judgmental way. They should listen to the child rather than provide advice and make it clear that the concern will be shared with the Safeguarding Lead and recorded, in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil.

All current ELAN schools use CPOMS to confidentially record all disclosures including date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps.

9. Providing the right level of support when it's needed

All concerns related to mental health are reported to the SENDCo and recorded so that the level of need can be assessed in order to provide the necessary support either from within ELAN or from an external specialist service. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible.

School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the SENDCO following the assessment process, and in consultation with the pupil and their parents and carers.

Referrals will only go ahead if it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs, and only with the consent of the pupil and parent/carer.

ELAN recognises that some children will need ongoing support and the pastoral team will 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 recognise that when a pupil is experiencing mental health issues 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 understand that parents and carers react in different ways to knowing their child is experiencing mental health issues and we will be sensitive and supportive. We also aim to reassure by explaining that experiencing mental health issues is common, that the school has experience of this and that help and advice are available.

10. SEND and mental health

Persistently experiencing mental health issues may lead to children having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age. Where appropriate (in consultation with parents/carers) SENDCOs may place children onto the SEND register, so

that their needs can be sensitively explored, supported and monitored through the school SEND offer and specialist support services accessed where appropriate.

11. Involving children

Every year we appoint and train a group of children as our Junior Wellbeing Champions, who actively participate in whole school campaigns on health and wellbeing. They gather pupils' views about our approach, our curriculum and how children are feeling and feed this back during termly meetings, to help us evaluate our practice.

12. Supporting and training staff

We are committed to ensuring that staff receive appropriate training to effectively support children's mental health and wellbeing.

13. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and may be revised in line with feedback from staff and in response to statutory updates.

14. Additional sources of information or support

The following may be useful sources of information or support:

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

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

www.youngminds.org.uk champions young people's mental health and wellbeing

www.mind.org.uk advice and support on poor mental health

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