



# MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

## 2024 - 2025

**Mental Health Lead: Jack Davis**

Approved by	
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Signed:	
Date:	21 <sup>st</sup> August 2024
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## REVIEW SHEET

The information in the table below provides details of the earlier versions of this document and brief details of reviews and, where appropriate amendments which have been made to later versions.

Version Number	Version Description	Date of Revision
1	Original	Jul 23
2	Review	Aug 24

## 1. Introduction

The staff at Asby Endowed school are passionate about making a difference to young people. Our vision is to create a secure and happy environment, where parents, staff, governors and the community work together to provide the best education possible.

We are proud of how well we know every single pupil and understand that, without good mental health, our pupils cannot be expected to reach their potential academically, emotionally or personally.

**Mental health is a state of well-being that impacts our ability to thrive.** *It is a state of mind and body that affects our happiness and sense of safety, aided by a sense of connection with people, community and the wider environment.*

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice identifies Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) need as one of the four areas of need. The Senior Mental Health Lead (SMHL) will work in conjunction with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo) to respond to SEMH needs.

All children go through ups and downs in their school career but some, approximately 10%, have a diagnosable mental health need, which impacts on their quality of life.

There are *risk factors* that can have a negative impact on our mental health, such as illness, financial issues or harmful relationships. On the other hand, there are *protective factors* that can improve our resilience, such as self-efficacy, family or healthy relationships.

To promote good mental health, we should strive to make conversations about our thoughts and feelings normal. Pupils should have a good awareness of the **Zones of Regulation**, which detail the range of emotions we experience and the strategies that can help us to cope when we experience strong or uncomfortable feelings.

School should be a supportive and nurturing place where children are given the opportunity to develop self-esteem, have positive experiences and build resilience. For some learners, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting pupils' well-being and sense of belonging.

## 2. Link to other Policies

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with our policies on Safeguarding, Child Protection, Behaviour, Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) and Special Educational Needs (SEN).

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health. Some children may need help and staff need to be alert to this. *Early identification* is essential if we are to achieve success in this area.

All staff understand that there are risk factors which leave children vulnerable to poor mental health. They also understand that there are protective factors that protect children from the negative effects of adversity.

#### **4. Confidentiality**

In line with our Safeguarding Policy, all disclosures are recorded and held in individual pupils' files, including date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of disclosure and relevant actions.

We recognise that it is important for staff to stay calm and non-judgemental to pupils who disclose a concern about them or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of children is paramount; staff should listen rather than advise.

Staff cannot promise confidentiality. They must make it clear that concerns will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Depute Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

We recognise that disclosures can be non-verbal. Behaviour can often be a communication of an unmet need or message.

#### **5. Supporting The School Community**

Pastorally, we have a duty to respond to the social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs of our pupils and staff. As such, we follow the model advocated by Public Health England:

- We take a *holistic view* of promoting the mental health of our school community and have an understanding that positive relationships, as well as the right assessment and support, are essential in order to fully support everyone in our community.
- *School leaders* are at the core of what we are trying to achieve in this area; they prioritise their own well-being and do their utmost to promote the mental health of the whole school community.

## 6. Supporting Pupils

Our response to the SEMH needs of our pupils' centres on four areas:

<u>Prevention</u>	<u>Identification</u>	<u>Intervention</u>	<u>Specialist Support</u>
<p>We aim to make mental health problems less likely by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- creating a <b>calm and purposeful environment</b> that meets the needs of all pupils</li> <li>- using the '<b>Zones of Regulation</b>' to further understanding of thoughts and feelings</li> <li>- encouraging <b>open discussions about mental health</b>, among children and staff alike</li> <li>- whole-class <b>mindfulness</b> activities</li> <li>- highlighting the benefits of <b>exercise</b></li> <li>- <b>Worries and wishes box</b></li> <li>- <b>PSHE curriculum</b></li> </ul>	<p>We will identify mental health problems by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>recognise emerging issues</b> and <b>share concerns</b> early</li> <li>- <b>communication with the SENCo</b> to determine social, emotional, mental health need</li> <li>- <b>Boxall Profile</b></li> <li>- Emotional learning support assistant assessment resources</li> <li>- Three tables</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<p>We will consider the following interventions (where appropriate and necessary):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emotional learning support assistant (<b>ELSA</b>) intervention</li> <li>- Allocation of a <b>key adult</b></li> <li>- <b>Mood diary</b></li> <li>- Small <b>friendship skills</b> groups</li> <li>- Bespoke intervention tailored for specific needs, such as skills for life/ well-being programmes</li> </ul>	<p>For the children with the highest need, we will provide (or facilitate) the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>CAMHS</b> assessment</li> <li>- <b>Early Help Plan</b></li> <li>- Behavioural and emotional well-being officer (<b>BEWO</b>) support from Westmorland and Furness Council</li> <li>- <b>Educational Psychologist</b> involvement</li> </ul> <p>If the school or professionals conclude that a statutory education, health and care assessment is required, we refer to the SEND policy.</p>

## 7. Supporting Staff

Our response to SEMH needs of staff centres on four areas:

<u>Prevention</u>	<u>Identification</u>	<u>Intervention</u>	<u>Specialist Support</u>
<p>We aim to make mental health problems less likely by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- creating a <b>relaxed environment</b> that helps staff to feel calm and confident</li> <li>- encouraging <b>open discussions about mental health</b></li> <li>- taking part in whole-class <b>mindfulness</b> activities</li> <li>- highlighting the benefits of <b>exercise</b></li> <li>- Encouraging staff to seek support from their <b>line manager</b> if they are feeling overwhelmed</li> </ul>	<p>We will identify mental health problems by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>recognising emerging issues</b> and <b>share concerns</b> early</li> <li>- <b>communicating with the senior mental health lead (SMHL)</b> as soon as possible to ensure understanding</li> <li>- making the community aware that <b>anyone can report a concern</b> about someone else's mental health</li> <li>- <b>monitoring attendance</b>, as this can be a sign that staff are working unsustainably</li> </ul>	<p>We will consider the following intervention (where appropriate and necessary):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- allocation of a <b>key member of staff</b></li> <li>- staff will <b>be released from day-to-day responsibilities</b> to catch-up with their work, if this is the source of poor mental health</li> <li>- <b>peer-to-peer</b> support or supervision from elsewhere in the Eden Rural Alliance cluster</li> <li>- <b>Mood diary</b></li> </ul>	<p>For staff with the highest level of need, we will provide (or facilitate) the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- referral to our employee assist provider (<b>Smart Clinic</b>) for occupational help or <b>virtual counselling</b></li> <li>- support from <b>occupational therapists</b></li> <li>- support from <b>Westmorland and Furness Council</b>, in particular the educational psychology or behaviour and emotional well-being services</li> </ul>

## **8. Monitoring**

If and when pupil intervention takes place, it is the responsibility of the SENCo (special educational needs co-ordinator) to monitor its effectiveness, in line with our SEND (special educational needs) policy. This is essential, to ensure that resources are allocated fairly and in a targeted manner.

Where staff are allocated support, we will closely monitor the quality of this, based on the impact on the recipient of support.

Entry and exit surveys will be used in most instances where children have received social, emotional and mental health support. Where necessary and appropriate, we will also use entry and exit surveys for members of staff.

## **9. Working with Families**

The relationship with parents/carers can be a crucial factor in providing effective mental health support. We have an Open Door Policy and pride ourselves on listening and responding to the concerns of families.

Where appropriate, we will signpost organisations or websites where advice can be provided on topics such as anxiety, stress management and sleep.

When concerns are raised in school, we will contact parents and arrange a meeting. In most cases, parents/ carers will be involved in their children's interventions. We will always keep children informed if their child is at risk.

## **10. Pupil Voice**

We conduct regular pupil voice interviews with all pupils to gauge their attitudes and assess their risk/need in terms of mental health.

We have a Worries and Wishes Box, where children are encouraged to share their concerns and worries at school, including if they are worried about someone else.

In entry and exit surveys, we record pupils' thoughts and feelings, before and after they have received SEMH support.

## **11. Supporting and Training Staff**

Our aim is for all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health to be able to promote emotional well-being and identify need.

Some staff have specific training and responsibilities but all staff are responsible for the safety and health of pupils.

Our Senior Mental Health Lead (SMHL) has received SMHL training from Leeds Beckett University, as part of a three-month structured programme. This has been fed-back to staff as part of an In-Service Education and Training (INSET) day.

Where relevant, future training will be shared with all staff to ensure continuous professional development in this area.