

# Ashford CE Primary School



## Promoting Positive Well-Being and Mental Health Policy

Updated Policy: March 2023

Approved by FGB: 27 April 2023

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ P Wells \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Governors

# Promoting Positive Well-Being and Mental Health Policy

## Our School Vision

We are a caring Christian community where everyone adopts an “I can” attitude; everyone feels valued, safe and loved by God. We celebrate our God-given individuality, achievements and talents and we aspire, with God’s help, to become the best that we can be. We believe that each one of us has the ability to achieve our highest potential, living and learning in the fullness of God.

I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.

*Philippians 4v13*

At Ashford CE Primary School we recognise that in order to fulfil our vision and promote our positive Christian ethos in school, all children need the foundations of positive mental health to be able to shine both academically, personally and socially.

Mental Health is how we feel, how we think and how we behave. Mental Health promotion for children and young people is everyone’s responsibility.

It is about:

- Being able to form and maintain relationships with others
- Being adaptable to change and other people’s expectations
- Being able to have fun
- Being open to learning
- Being able to develop a sense of right and wrong
- Being able to develop the resilience to manage ordinary setbacks
- Being able to develop and maintain self esteem

All children and young people need to:

- Be able to connect with others by participating in groups and teams
- Know they are capable and able to achieve
- Know that they count in their world and can contribute to their community
- Know they have courage and can manage risks appropriately; everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable

At times anyone may need additional support to maintain or develop good mental health. The mental health of children and young people, adults in school, parents and carers and the wider whole school community will impact on all areas of development, learning, achievement and experiences. All children have the right to be educated in an environment that supports and promotes positive mental health for everybody. The coronavirus pandemic has resulted in fundamental changes to the lives of children and young people. The Public Health England COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing

surveillance report suggests that whilst some evidence shows that children and young people have generally coped well during the pandemic (March to September 2020), other evidence suggests that some children and young people, especially those with certain characteristics, such as those who are disadvantaged economically, females, and those with pre-existing mental health needs, appear to have experienced greater negative impacts on their mental health and wellbeing. The school also recognises the impact of the pandemic on mental health & wellbeing on our pupils and is vigilant in looking for warning signs and ensuring pupils are well supported.

All adults have the right to work in an environment that supports and promotes positive mental health for everybody. Ashford CE Primary School recognises these needs and rights.

We are committed to raising awareness, increasing understanding and ensuring that we can and do make a difference by providing an environment where all people feel safe, secure and able to achieve and experience success and wellbeing. A distinctive feature of our school is the positive, caring and supportive atmosphere we have created. The consistent approach from our dedicated staff means that our school environment and school ethos all promote the mental health of the whole school community. The school has trained staff as mental health first aiders.

At Ashford CE we have a whole school approach to mental health & wellbeing as outlined below:

Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing

**Figure 2. Eight principles to promoting a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing.**



At Ashford CE Primary School there is a mentally healthy environment where children:

- Have opportunities to participate in activities that encourage belonging (e.g. Circle time, Peer to peer support and buddying, Drawing and talking, Play/Art/Lego therapy sessions, Friendship building sessions and positive behaviour support)
- Have opportunities to participate in decision making (e.g. Pupil voice sessions with SLT or Governors, House Captains, Sports Captains, Play Leaders, Eco-Team and Buddying.)
- Have opportunities to celebrate academic and non-academic achievements (e.g. Celebration Worship, WOW work, Gold Awards and other awards)
- Can identify safe adults who they can talk to and will support them if they have any worries or need to talk to someone
- Have their unique talents and abilities identified and developed (e.g. Children leading their own learning, extra-curricular clubs, child led lunch time activities and peer buddying as well as support such as wet play leaders in class, peer and buddying including across key stages)
- Have opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others (e.g. residential, school trips, and play leaders)
- Have opportunities to reflect (e.g. Circle time, time out cards or opportunities, tents/quiet areas in class, time out spaces such as Otters classroom, emotional coaching and alternative lunchtime provision such as Lego Club or nurture groups)
- Have access to appropriate support that meets their needs (e.g. Teacher and TLA support in class (where appropriate), Inclusion Team, SLT and external agencies where appropriate)
- Have a right to an environment that is safe, clean, attractive and well cared for. Children are surrounded by adults who model positive and appropriate behaviours and interactions at all times.

At Ashford CE Primary School there is a mentally healthy environment where all staff:

- Have their individual needs recognised and responded to in a holistic way
- Have a range of systems in place to support mental well-being (e.g. Performance Management, Briefings, Training, Occupation Health and access to counselling service)
- Have recognition of their work-life balance including staff well-being weeks
- Feel valued and have opportunities in the decision-making processes (e.g. termly pupil progress meetings, phase planning, supported subject leadership with regular release time)
- Success is recognised and celebrated
- Are provided with opportunities for CPD both personally and professionally
- Are regularly invited to take part in a range of well-being initiatives such as shared lunches information about support through "My Rewards" and health promotion from the EAP
- Can access support and guidance at times of emotional need in both the short and long term

At Ashford CE Primary School there is a mentally healthy environment where parents and carers:

- Are recognised for their significant contribution to children and young people's mental health
- Are welcomed, included and work in partnership with the school and agencies

- Are provided with opportunities to ask for help when needed and signposted to appropriate agencies for support (Inclusion Leader, Community signing Posting, DSL Team, Early Help / CAF)
- Are clear about their role, expectations and responsibilities in working in partnership with the school (e.g. home school agreement shared annually, parents meetings, open door policy to discuss any concerns)
- Opinions are sought, valued and responded to (e.g. Questionnaires, Parents workshops, coffee mornings, Headteacher meetings, SLT on duty on playground/gate before and after school each day)
- Strengths and difficulties are recognised, acknowledged and challenged appropriately

A mentally healthy environment is a place where the whole school community:

- Is involved in promoting positive mental health
- Is valued for the role it plays in promoting positive mental health
- Contributes towards the ethos of the school

At Ashford CE Primary School we pride ourselves on the opportunities we provide to promote positive mental health for everybody, adults and children alike. A mentally healthy school is one that adopts a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing. It is a school that helps children flourish, learn and succeed by providing opportunities for them, and the adults around them, to develop the strengths and coping skills that underpin resilience. A mentally healthy school sees positive mental health and wellbeing as fundamental to its values, mission and culture. It is a school where child, staff and parent/carer mental health and wellbeing is seen as 'everybody's business' During 2023 the school has been chosen to take part in a Relational & Restorative Pilot Project with full staff training which will support pupils emotional development.

Opportunities that arise from both within the curriculum and beyond, as part of our PHSE/SMSC (Jigsaw) and creative curriculum, our class circle-times, and peer support/buddying all support our drive to raise awareness of Social, Emotional and Mental well-being. Our range of lunch-time and after school clubs, as well as our Positive Behaviour Policy and our Anti-bullying Policy all support and have a positive effect on the mental well-being of our children.

Buddying and whole school activities strengthen relationships and provide different ways of working and can involve the wider community. The way our Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Curriculum is delivered in school has a significant impact on positive mental health. The nurturing environment of our school, timetabled specialist support for children with additional needs, specialist Inclusion team, nurture provision for our most vulnerable children, and interventions in place all contribute to mental well-being.

### **Early Identification and Warning Signs**

All staff will be vigilant in identifying a range of possible difficulties that may be contributing to a pupil's poor mental health, including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality

- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstance
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

School staff may also 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 communicate their concerns with the designated child protection and safeguarding officer or the emotional wellbeing lead as appropriate. Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

All concerns are reported to the designated adults within school and needs are assessed through a triage approach with SLT, class teachers and SENDCO to ensure the child gets the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service, as quickly as possible.

### **Physical Wellbeing**

We place a high emphasis on the importance of physical activity and exercise in promoting mental health. Alongside a full and enriching PE curriculum we also promote daily physical activity breaks and active playtimes. We have fitness activities in the playground at lunchtime including specialist sports coaches to support children and staff. Adult Play leaders are used to encourage team games and healthy competitions at lunchtimes. We also have specialist lunchtime clubs for our most vulnerable children.

A variety of sports clubs run throughout the year to promote physical and mental well-being. Our Healthy Schools Commitment highlights our emphasis on teaching our pupils the importance of a healthy body and a healthy mind. This has a very positive impact on all our children and contributes to raising self-esteem, connecting and communicating with others.

Good staff wellbeing is essential for cultivating a mentally healthy school, for retaining and motivating staff and for promoting pupil wellbeing and attainment. As school staff juggle a multitude of different tasks and demands, it is important that everyone is given the right emotional and practical support so that they can, in turn, support their pupils. At Ashford CE we are developing a culture of support from SLT and leaders as well as peer support where everyone feels valued and has the opportunity

to develop their skills and career in education. We provide clear vision and expectations ensuring that policies and procedures are transparent, consistent and fairly applied. We have a strong culture of performance management with a clear focus on CPD. Our vision includes building leadership from within our school and giving staff the opportunities to reach their potential. We encourage team working with a sense of purpose and encourage everyone to be part of the journey of school development. We also provide support to staff through occupational health and a confidential 24-hour employee support service.

Parent/carer engagement is important because working together has been shown to have a promising impact on the wellbeing, attendance, behaviour, sense of school belonging, intellectual development and attainment of children across a range of social and economic backgrounds. At Ashford CE we see every parent/carer contact as an opportunity to support protective factors, so that parents can work with us to help their children flourish and learn. This includes being consistently available and in sight on the playground in the mornings and after school so that parents and carers know staff and SLT and can feel confident to approach staff with issues. The school also aims to increase opportunities and support through sign posting to services available through the local family centre.

The implementation of this policy for promoting mental health in schools:

- Should underpin all policies and practices currently used in schools.
- Will strengthen and promote resilience throughout the whole school community and empower everyone to face life's challenges.
- Will raise awareness as to how the whole school community can look after their own mental health and that of others.
- Will provide our children with the foundations for lifelong learning.

This policy promotes positive mental health. It is a working document and has been developed in consultation with the whole school community.

**The promotion of positive mental health of our school community is everyone's business.**

Read in conjunction with:

- School Development Plan
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Equality Policy
- SEND Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- EYFS Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- PSHE and RSE Policy
- DFE guidance - Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing [Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)