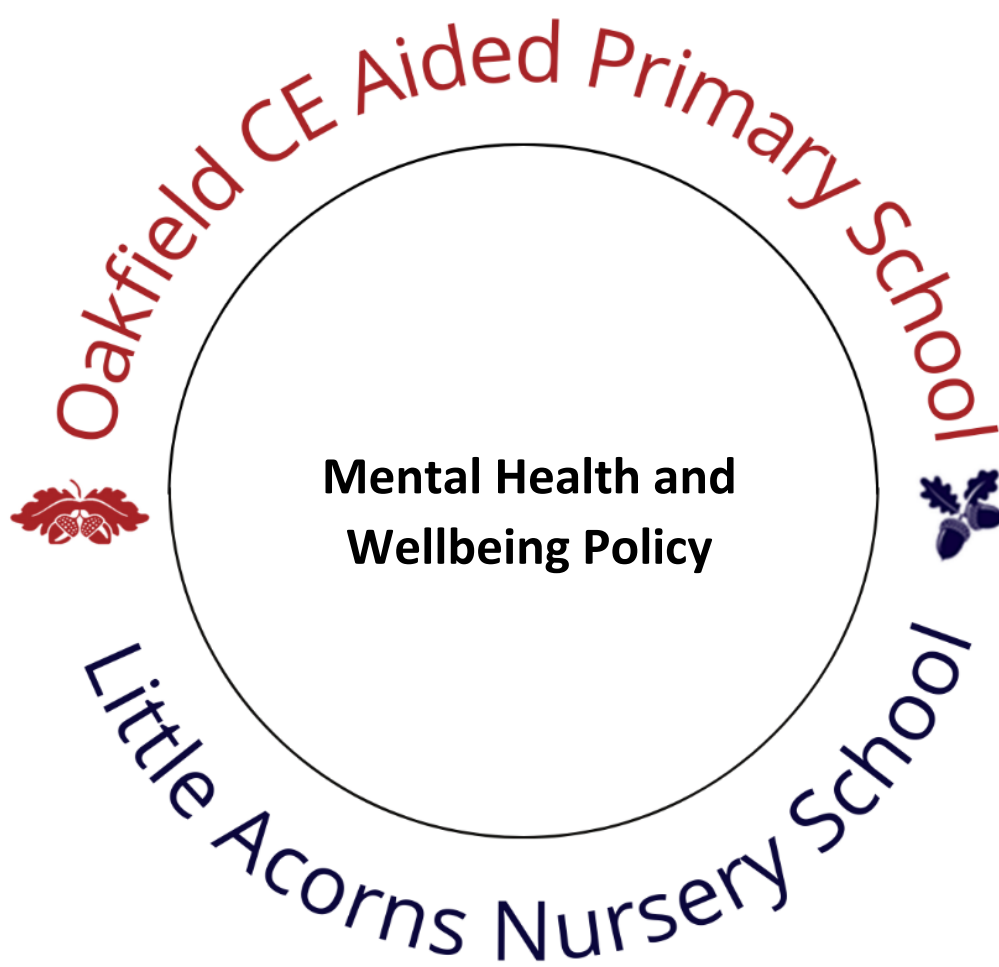




Date of Approval:	2 nd February 2026
Committee/FGB	FGB
Responsible:	Vikki Reader – Headteacher
Review Date:	January 2029

Signed:

Chair of Governors

Signed:

Headteacher

Date:

2nd February 2026

REVISION No:	Date issued:	Prepared by:	Approved by:	Comments:
1	Jan 26	BH		Page 1 Edited and tightened the wording in the <i>Policy Statement</i> Page 1-2 Included current statutory guidance and best practice, which is reflected throughout document, into the <i>scope</i> section Page 2 Updated aims of the policy Page 2 Updated list of key staff Page 3 Added new section <i>Graduated Approach to Mental Health Support</i> Page 4 – end Updated all sections to reflect current processes and information Page 9 Added Appendix 1 (<i>Graduated Approach to Mental Health Support</i>)

Policy Statement

Mental health is 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 (World Health Organization).

At Oakfield CE Primary School, our school values of love, trust, honesty and hope underpin our approach to mental health and wellbeing. We are committed to being an attachment- and trauma-aware school, where relationships, safety and inclusion are central to learning and development.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

We adopt a whole-school approach to mental health which:

- Promotes positive wellbeing for all pupils and staff (universal provision)
- Provides timely targeted support when early concerns arise
- Works in partnership with families and external agencies when specialist support is needed

We recognise that strong mental health is fundamental to academic achievement, positive behaviour, attendance and lifelong wellbeing.

Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors. It should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental health and wellbeing overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue, our safeguarding a child protection policy and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

This policy reflects current statutory guidance and best practice, including:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) – safeguarding and mental health as part of child protection
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Children and Families Act 2014 – SEND and graduated response
- SEND Code of Practice (0–25 years)
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Statutory Guidance
- Ofsted Education Inspection Framework – personal development and safeguarding
- Mental Health and Wellbeing in Schools Green Paper (2017) and subsequent MHST expansion
- Equality Act 2010 – reasonable adjustments and protected characteristics

Mental health concerns may also constitute safeguarding concerns and will be managed in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Aims of the Policy

We aim to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils
- Develop emotional literacy and resilience in pupils
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing in order to be able to identify concerns early and intervene promptly
- Provide a clear graduated response to mental health needs
- Support families through advice, signposting and workshops
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues through workshops for children and parents, and through our PSHE curriculum
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and wellbeing issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers
- Work collaboratively with external services

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

Becki Howlett - Designated Safeguarding Lead & Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead

Hannah Doyle - Deputy Headteacher, DDSL links with mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead and Lead for Religious education
Vikki Reader – Headteacher and DDSL
Amy Senior - PSHE Subject Leader
Natalie Dean – Family Liaison Officer and Children’s Champion
Sam Scovell – SENDCO
Jane Crabb – Attendance officer

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Mental Health Lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary. Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the school SENCO or DSL.

Graduated Approach to Mental Health Support

Oakfield follows a graduated response model in line with SEND guidance and local authority pathways. (Appendix 1)

Universal Provision – Whole School Offer

For pupils whose needs are met within everyday school provision:

- Safe, nurturing classroom environments
- Strong relationships with trusted adults
- Wellbeing check-ins
- Assemblies/ worship and PSHE/RSHE lessons
- Mindfulness and regulation strategies (Zones of Regulation - ZoR)
- Positive behaviour approaches
- Kind Minds peer support group
- Children’s Champion support

Pupils are generally engaged in learning, have age-appropriate emotional responses, and attend regularly.

Targeted Support – School-Led Interventions

For pupils showing emerging or short-term difficulties:

- Small group wellbeing interventions
- ELSA or social skills groups
- Friendship and self-esteem groups
- Pastoral support plans
- Children’s Champion support
- Short-term timetable or classroom adjustments
- Regular parent meetings
- Referral to MHST, School Nurse or REST

Concerns and interventions are recorded on CPOMS and reviewed in weekly pastoral meetings.

Specialist Support – External Agencies

For pupils with significant or persistent mental health needs:

- CAMHS referrals
- Educational Psychology
- Barnardo's or other commissioned services
- GP involvement
- Children's Services (including MASH where safeguarding thresholds are met)
- EHCP or Individual Healthcare Plans where appropriate
- Individual care plan where relevant

School continues to provide support alongside external professionals and coordinates multi-agency working.

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receives a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others. We will ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within schools and in the local community. Oakfield runs a Kind Minds peer support group, developed in partnership with the MHST, which:

- Promotes empathy and inclusion
- Provides peer-to-peer encouragement
- Develops leadership and emotional literacy
- Supports early identification of concerns
- Signposts to further support

Pupils are trained and supervised by staff and the group complements, not replaces, adult support.

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil or staff member is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. Concerns may arise from:

- Staff observations

- Parental concerns
- Pupil self-referral
- Attendance or behaviour patterns

All concerns must be recorded on CPOMS. Patterns are monitored through pastoral and safeguarding meetings. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with respective Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead. Possible warning signs 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

Managing disclosures

A pupil or staff member may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. If an individual chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. All staff are trained to respond appropriately:

- Listen calmly and non-judgementally
- Reassure but do not promise confidentiality
- Prioritise safety over investigation
- Record on CPOMS
- Share with DSL/Mental Health Lead

All disclosures by a pupil should be recorded on CPOMS. This record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps will be actioned by those responsible.

Confidentiality

Information is shared on a need-to-know basis and in line with safeguarding guidance. Pupils are informed when information must be shared for their safety.

Parents should be informed if there are concerns about their child's mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the pupil should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents providing there is no immediate risk of harm. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents for them or with them. If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the safeguard lead (DSL) must be informed immediately.

Working with Parents

We view parents and carers as key partners in supporting children's mental health. Conversations about concerns can be distressing, and parents may initially respond with fear, upset or frustration. Staff will respond with empathy and professionalism, allow time for parents to process information, and focus on working collaboratively in the child's best interests.

We will:

- Communicate concerns sensitively and clearly, prioritising face-to-face meetings where possible
- Provide clear next steps and agreed actions at the end of each meeting
- Offer written information and signposting, recognising that parents may find it difficult to absorb information at first
- Provide clear contact routes for follow-up questions and arrange review meetings where needed
- Keep accurate, confidential records of meetings and agreed actions

Parent Workshops

Oakfield offers **parent workshops linked to children's mental health**, often in partnership with the Mental Health Support Team (MHST), covering areas such as:

- Anxiety
- Emotional regulation
- Behaviour support
- Online safety and wellbeing

These sessions aim to strengthen home-school consistency, build parental confidence, and reduce barriers to accessing support.

In addition, we will:

- Publish reliable mental health information and support services on the school website
- Ensure parents know who to contact if they have concerns about their own child or another pupil
- Make this policy easily accessible to families
- Share strategies for supporting wellbeing through information evenings and communications
- Inform parents about PSHE/RSHE mental health content and suggest ways to reinforce learning at home

Supporting Peers

When a pupil is experiencing mental health difficulties, this can also impact their friendships. Peers may wish to help but may feel unsure how to do so safely. In some cases, particularly where self-harm or eating difficulties are present, there is a risk that unhelpful coping strategies may be reinforced within peer groups.

To promote safety and wellbeing, school will consider on a case-by-case basis which peers may require additional guidance or support. This may be provided through individual or small-group work and will be planned in consultation with the pupil and, where appropriate, their parents and relevant professionals.

Support will focus on helping peers to understand:

- What information it is appropriate and helpful for them to know
- How they can offer supportive friendship without taking on adult responsibilities
- What actions or language may unintentionally increase distress
- Warning signs that indicate their friend may need further help

In addition, peers will be supported to:

- Know where and how to seek help for themselves
- Access safe, age-appropriate information
- Develop healthy coping strategies for managing worry, anxiety or distress

All decisions will prioritise safeguarding, confidentiality and the emotional safety of all pupils.

Staff Wellbeing

We recognise that staff wellbeing directly impacts pupil wellbeing. Support for staff includes:

- Access to wellbeing resources
- Supportive leadership and supervision
- Training on trauma-informed practice
- Clear safeguarding procedures

Staff may also access occupational health support through the Local Authority.

Regular supervision is in place for DSL and FLO.

Training

All staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular Safeguarding training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe. We will share relevant information at our whole school CPD days & via email 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.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Policy Review

25. This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum.

Appendix 1 – following page

Graduated Approach - Mental Health Pathways

Universal Offer

Keep an ongoing record of behaviours of concern, changes in behaviour, pastoral concerns, voice of the child

School level support

There is a concern identified relating to a child's mental health and well being but can be managed with support from school. Discussion weekly in pastoral meetings (en are driven by a holistic approach. Additional interventions are agreed to reduce barriers to learning, behaviours of concern and mitigate any known risk factors.), Parent/ school communication, pastoral observations, Children's Champion support, well-being check-ins, Mindfulness, Kind Minds, parent workshops with MHST, CPD for staff

Targeted Support

For pupils identified as needing extra support, often short-term or small group.

Small Group Wellbeing Sessions
Focus groups on friendship, self-esteem, or coping skills (e.g.lunch hub), ELSA, Social Skills Groups, Regular Parent/Carer Meetings to share updates and agree on shared strategies for support, Short-term Adaptations/ temporary adjustments to timetable, seating, or cognitive load, Referral to MHST, school nurse, or REST

Specialist Support

For pupils with significant or ongoing mental health needs, often involving external professionals.

Referrals to external, specialist agencies eg CAMHS, Ed Psych, Barnardos, Crisis, GP, Personalised support plans e.g EHCP, IHP, Children's services



Has needs met within universal provision

Engaged and participating in lessons and school life, Good relationships with peers and staff, Able to manage emotions with age-appropriate ups and downs, Occasional worries or sadness, but these are short-lived and do not impact learning or behaviour, Willing to share concerns with trusted adults, Regular attendance and punctuality, Typical range of emotions and behaviours for age, Positive, stable friendships, Responds well to the school's general, wellbeing activities (e.g., check-ins, assemblies), No ongoing concerns raised by staff or parents

Despite the interventions and recommendations put in place by school, evidence shows that additional resources/ agencies are required in order to be able to meet the child's needs.

Targeted support

Noticeable change in behaviour or mood (e.g., becoming withdrawn, tearful, anxious, angry) Struggles with friendships or social situations Difficulty concentrating, increased absences, reluctance to come to school, Recurrent worries, low self-esteem, or negative self-talk, Difficulty managing emotions, May have experienced a recent event (bereavement, family breakdown, bullying) Concerns raised by staff, parents, or the pupil themselves Needs not fully met by universal provision (e.g., still struggling after whole-class interventions)

Specialist Support

Persistent or escalating mental health difficulties (e.g., ongoing anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicidal thoughts) Major impact on learning, relationships, or daily functioning Significant withdrawal, aggression, or risk-taking behaviour, Frequent and prolonged absences or school refusal, Evidence of harm to self or others, or disclosure of abuse/trauma, Unresponsive to targeted interventions, or needs increase despite support, Complex needs often co-existing with SEND or safeguarding concerns