



Mental Health and Wellbeing policy for First Federation Trust schools

Policy statement

First Federation Trust aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health is. Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or 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 Organisation). We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement.

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". Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience 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 engender a sense of belonging and community. Our schools ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or 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.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a school where:

- All children are valued.
- Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma.
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued.
- Bullying is not tolerated.

We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils. In order for humans to flourish, nurturing the health and well-being of pupils is a key part of the holistic education that we provide in all of the schools within our Trust. It is part of an embedded approach across each of our school's

ethos and links with health education, spiritual development, personal development programmes and the wider school curriculum.

In addition to children's wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and wellbeing. At our schools, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our staff. We know that everyone experiences different life challenges, and that each of us may need help to cope with them sometimes. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for staff affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

We understand that anyone and everyone may need additional emotional support. At our schools, positive mental health is everybody's responsibility. We all have a role to play.

Scope

This document describes the Trust and individual schools' approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing. It is intended as guidance for all staff and leaders.

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Medical Needs, Anti-Bullying, SEND and Equalities. Links with the individual 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.

This policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing.
- 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.

By supporting children with their mental health and wellbeing, our goal is to:

- Help children to understand their emotions and experiences better.
- Ensure our pupils feel comfortable sharing any concerns and worries.
- Help children to form and maintain relationships.
- Encourage children to be confident and help to promote their self-esteem.
- Help children to develop resilience and ways of coping with setbacks.

We will always promote a healthy environment by:

- Promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all students and staff.
- Celebrating both academic and non-academic achievements.
- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging and community.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth and to reflect.
- Promoting our pupils' voices and giving them the opportunity to participate in decision making.

- Celebrating each pupil for who they are and making every child feel valued and respected.
- Adopting a whole school approach to mental health and providing support to any pupil that needs it.
- Raising awareness amongst staff and children about mental health issues and their signs and symptoms.
- Enabling staff to respond to early warning signs of mental-ill health in children
- Supporting staff who are struggling with their mental health.

In developing this policy we have taken account of:

- Promoting children and young people’s emotional health and wellbeing, Public Health England 2015.
- Preparing to teach about mental health, PSHE Association 2015.
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools, DfE 2014.
- Supporting children with medical conditions, DfE 2014
- Children and Young People’s Mental Health: State of the Nation 2016.

Lead members of staff

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need. All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as: physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They should also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy (see appendix 1 on risk and protective factors).

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

(Insert name of specific staff member in school)- Designated Child Protection/ Safeguarding officer

(Insert name)- Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead

(Insert name)- Lead First Aider

(Insert name)- Pastoral staff

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the School environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to children with mental health needs and their families.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or well-being of a pupil should speak to 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 the Designated Child Protection Officer. 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

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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 in conjunction with the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Specific 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

Our PSHE and RSE curriculum is developed to give pupils the skills, knowledge, and understanding they need to keep themselves mentally healthy. This includes resilience techniques and training. We will regularly review our PSHE curriculum and lesson content to ensure that it is meeting the aims outlined in this policy. We will also implement this into our curriculum at all stages to provide children with strategies to help keep them mentally well.

Teaching at primary level should focus on:

- The importance of daily exercise, good nutrition and sufficient sleep.
- The steps pupils can take to protect their own and others' health and wellbeing – this includes teaching simple self-care techniques, personal hygiene, how to prevent health and wellbeing problems, and basic first aid.
- The relationship between good physical health and good mental wellbeing – including the benefits exercise and spending time outdoors can have on mental wellbeing.
- The benefits of hobbies, interests and participation in communities.
- The benefits of rationing the time spent online and the risks of excessive use of electronic devices.
- Issues relating to isolation, loneliness, unhappiness, bullying and the negative impact of poor health and wellbeing.
- Why social media, computer games and online gaming have age restrictions, and how to manage common online difficulties – this should be covered later in primary schools.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort that are being taught, in each of our schools. There will 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 teach mental health and emotional wellbeing in a safe and sensitive manner which helps and supports those concerned.

We have a range of support available in school for any children struggling, as listed below:

- circle time or similar peer discussion and support activities
- therapeutic activities like mindfulness sessions,
- pupil wellbeing groups.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and will regularly highlight support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Our aim being that pupils understand:

- What help is available.
- Who it is aimed at.
- How to access it.
- Why to access it.
- What is likely to happen next.

Warning signs

School staff may 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 these warning signs should communicate their concerns to

Possible warning signs:

- 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 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 a pupil decides to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend, a member of staff should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise. The first thought should be for the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held in the pupil's confidential file (this may include a record on CPOMs). The written 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.

This information should be shared

with.....who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps. It may be necessary to make a referral to CAMHs.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass on our concerns about a pupil, then we should discuss this with the pupil:

- Who we are going to talk to.
- What we are going to tell them.
- Why we need to tell them.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually, this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil. It also ensures continuity of care in our absence and provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents should be informed if there are concerns about their child's mental health and wellbeing. Pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, pupil should be given time (24hours) to share this with their parents, prior to the school making contact. 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 child protection officer.....must be informed immediately.

Working with parents

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents, we should consider each case individually, using the following questions:

- Can the meeting happen face to face?
- Where should the meeting happen?
- Who should be present?
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It may be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues. They may respond with anger, fear or be upset during the first conversation. We should provide the parents with time to reflect on what has been said.

Further sources of information and support should be provided to parents for them to take away, where possible.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking a follow up meeting or phone call. Finish each meeting with agreed next steps and keep a record of the meeting (on CPOM's or in the child's individual record). A copy of this record should be sent to parents.

Working with all parents

Parents are often welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their child's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their child or a friend of their child.
- Make our mental health policy accessible to parents (on the Trust and school websites).
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through regular information events.

Supporting peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either as one to one or in group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told.
- How friends can best support.
- Things friends should avoid doing/saying which may inadvertently cause upset.
- Warning signs that their friend needs help.

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves.
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition.
- Healthy ways of coping with difficult emotions they may be feeling.

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our additional CPD offer and will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more pupils.

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

The role of chaplaincy in our Church of England schools

School chaplains can often be a valuable source of support to schools. They may offer additional and specific spiritual and pastoral support of pupils, support for staff, critical incident support and community links.

In addition, it is helpful if chaplains:

- Can provide information about local religious groups.
- Are willing to recognise that in some circumstances it is unhelpful for an individual to focus on religious beliefs and activities can be harmful.
- Work closely with pastoral and mental health teams if spiritual needs can be recognised and helped.
- Make sure that staff, pupils and parents know about the help available for their spiritual and pastoral care.

Academic Resilience

It is a priority of all of our schools to ensure that we support pupils to establish academic resilience and achieve well despite adversity; this is in conjunction with our Trust vision of wishing every child has the opportunity to Flourish, Aspire and Achieve. Academic resilience means pupils achieving good educational outcomes despite adversity. This will be achieved when schools understand the contexts of the children and families they serve and are aware of when the basic needs are not being met so support can be tailored appropriately. Schools will work in partnership with others including parents, and health professionals in order to fully appreciate all that is available and to support families to fully access the best support for their child.

There is a whole school approach to resilience in that, although we cannot be responsible for all factors, there is a significant amount that schools can do; working with parents, utilising Pupil Premium funding, signposting and providing access for families to places of support and advice locally. Schools will support pupils through whole school practice and targeted interventions to develop their resilience.

Within our Church schools, a core principle is that we were created to live within a community, with others. Resilience can only be fully achieved when a person is part of a nurturing community. Being resilient means knowing when and where to get the help you need at any one time.

Our Church schools are focused upon the holistic development of young people, so that they might live life in all its fullness into adulthood. For this reason, schools will re-examine their curriculum and ethos regularly to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose. Our schools ensure that they meet the needs of all young people in alignment with the First Federation Trust vision to develop the whole child.

N. B The DfE has produced a useful document for schools to refer to when planning: Promoting young people's emotional health and wellbeing. It outlines eight principles schools should consciously adopt to promote education health and wellbeing.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, as a minimum. It is next due for review in June 2025.

It will also be reviewed and updated as appropriate.

Appendices

Appendix 1:

Protective and Risk factors (adapted from Mental Health and Behaviour DfE March 2016)

	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
In the Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic influences • Specific development delay • Communication difficulties • Physical illness • Academic failure • Low self-esteem • SEND 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being female (in younger children) • Secure attachment experience • Outgoing temperament as an infant • Good communication skills, sociability • Being a planner and having a belief in control • Humour • Problem solving skills and a positive attitude • Experiences of success and achievement • Faith or spirituality • Capacity to reflect
In the Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overt parental conflict including domestic violence • Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted) • Inconsistent or unclear discipline • Hostile and rejecting relationships • <i>Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs</i> • Physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect • Parental psychiatric illness • Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder • Death and loss – including loss of friendship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult) • Affection • Clear, consistent discipline • Support for education • Supportive long term relationship or the absence of severe discord
In the School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying • Discrimination • Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships • Negative peer influences • Peer pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear policies on behaviour and bullying • 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems • A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor pupil to teacher relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive classroom management • A sense of belonging • Positive peer influences
In the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic disadvantage • Homelessness • Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events • Discrimination • Other significant life events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider supportive network • Good housing • High standard of living • High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying • Opportunities for valued social roles • Range of sport/leisure activities

Appendix 2:

Specific mental health needs most commonly seen in school-aged children

For information see Annex C Main Types of Mental Health Needs Mental Health and Behaviour in School DfE March 2016

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>
Annex C includes definitions, signs and symptoms and suggested interventions for

- Anxiety (including panic attacks, phobias and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder OCD)
- Depression
- Eating Disorders
- Substance Misuse
- Self Harm

Appendix 3:

Where to get information and support

For support on specific mental health needs

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

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

For general information and support www.youngminds.org.uk
champions young people's mental health and wellbeing www.mind.org.uk
advice and support on mental health problems 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