



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

'This policy will be implemented in a way which honours the vision that every FCJ school is a community of persons - students, staff, governors - bound together in mutual respect and ready to rely on each other in fulfilling their privileged task as educators in a Catholic school.'

1. Aims

In line with our Catholic ethos and safeguarding responsibilities, Upton Hall School FCJ is committed to promoting and protecting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of all pupils, staff and wider members of the school community.

This policy outlines the school's approach to identifying, responding to and supporting students with emerging or established mental health needs, and should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Our aims are to:

- Promote a whole-school culture that fosters resilience, emotional literacy and wellbeing.
- Ensure mental health is treated with the same importance as physical health.
- Empower staff to identify early signs of mental ill health and respond appropriately.
- Ensure systems are in place to support pupils experiencing mental distress, including timely referrals.
- Engage parents and carers as partners in supporting their child's mental health.

The school's approach reflects four connected responsibilities:

- promoting positive mental wellbeing and helping to prevent the onset of mental ill health
- observing pupils and identifying emerging needs at an early stage
- providing timely universal, pastoral or targeted support
- liaising with or referring to specialist services where necessary

This Policy was written in consultation with national guidance and should be read alongside:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour For Learning Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is informed by:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (DfE, 2018)
- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)

This policy is also aligned with Wirral's local safeguarding arrangements and the Early Help Strategy.

3. Definitions

Mental health is a person's emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. It affects how individuals think, feel, relate to others and make choices.

Mental ill health can include a wide range of difficulties, from stress and anxiety to diagnosed conditions such as depression or eating disorders.

Mental health needs are not automatically safeguarding concerns. However, mental health difficulties can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. This may include self-harm, signs of an eating disorder, suicidal ideation or risk of suicide. They may also indicate that a pupil has experienced or is at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to diagnose a mental-health condition. School staff are well placed to notice changes, offer appropriate support and ensure that concerns are passed to the right person.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 All Staff

All staff are expected to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing through their daily interactions with pupils.
- Remain alert to early signs of mental health concerns.
- Record concerns on CPOMS, identifying them as pastoral or safeguarding in accordance with the CPOMS incident form. If staff are uncertain, they should select safeguarding concern and allow the DSL to determine the appropriate response.

Pastoral mental health concerns will ordinarily be coordinated by the pupil's Head of Year or other appropriate pastoral colleague. The DSL has oversight of all CPOMS incidents and will become directly involved where there is a safeguarding concern, significant risk or a need for specialist escalation.

4.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Senior Mental Health Lead

The DSL and Senior Mental Health Lead is Mr Philip Jones (Assistant Headteacher). He has overall strategic responsibility for safeguarding and mental health across the school. He is supported in the day-to-day coordination of mental health provision by Miss Paula Etheridge and Mrs Jo Call.

Mr Jones will:

- Oversee the school's graduated response to mental health concerns.
- Liaise with external services (e.g. CYPMHS, GPs, Early Help).
- Ensure staff are trained and supported in responding to mental health needs.
- Review and evaluate the impact of whole-school wellbeing initiatives.
- Work with the school's Mental Health Support Team (NHS) to strengthen the whole-school approach, obtain timely advice and provide evidence-based early support where appropriate.

4.3 Mental Health Coordination Support

Miss Etheridge, Mrs Call and Heads of Year work closely with the Senior Mental Health Lead to:

- Coordinate wellbeing support pathways for pupils.
- Liaise with pastoral staff and parents on individual cases.
- Lead awareness campaigns and assemblies.
- Maintain the visibility of support services across the school.

5. Recognising Concerns

Early identification is essential. Staff should be alert to changes in a pupil's:

- Mood, affect, or engagement
- Attendance or punctuality
- Social interactions or peer relationships
- Eating or sleeping habits
- Academic performance
- Physical presentation (e.g. hygiene, self-injury, fatigue)

Other changes in student presentation, such as:

- Social isolation
- Poor attendance or punctuality

- Expressing feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, worthlessness or feeling like a failure
- Abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Rapid weight loss or gain
- Secretive behaviour
- Covering parts of the body that they wouldn't have previously
- Refusing to participate in PE or being secretive when changing clothes
- Physical pain or nausea, with no obvious cause
- Physical injuries that appear to be self-inflicted
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide

Changes in attendance, punctuality, lesson attendance or engagement may indicate an emerging mental health need. The school will consider these alongside the pupil's wider circumstances and provide appropriate support, including for emotionally based school avoidance.

The school recognises that pupils with SEND or neurodivergence may experience or communicate emotional distress differently. Support will be personalised and reasonable adjustments considered where appropriate.

Concerns may emerge via CPOMS logs, classroom observations, parental disclosures or pupil self-report.

6. Responding to Mental Health Concerns

6.1 Immediate Risk or Crisis

Where a pupil appears to be at immediate risk of serious harm to themselves or another person, staff must:

- remain with the pupil and seek assistance
- inform the DSL or a Deputy DSL immediately
- obtain emergency medical help where there is an immediate threat to life, serious injury, an overdose or active suicidal intent or planning
- inform parents or carers unless doing so may place the pupil at additional risk
- record the concern on CPOMS
- follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy where the concern meets a safeguarding threshold

Where urgent advice is required but there is no immediate threat to life, the school will use the appropriate GP, NHS, MHST, CYPMHS or local crisis pathway.

6.2 Graduated Response

For low to moderate concerns, staff should:

- Offer a listening ear and supportive environment
- Explain limits of confidentiality and refer to the DSL
- Record the concern on CPOMS
- Refer to Head of Year for appropriate internal support (e.g. counselling, pastoral interventions, etc.)
- Head of Year may support the pupil in submitting a Branch referral for external support.
- Monitor and review through structured support plans

7. Managing Disclosures from Students Involving Mental Health

If a student makes a disclosure about themselves or a peer to a member of staff, staff should remain calm, non-judgmental and reassuring. They should follow guidance given in their annual safeguarding training.

Staff will focus on the student's emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to find out why they are feeling that way or offering advice.

Staff will always follow our school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and pass on all concerns to the DSL via CPOMS. All disclosures are recorded and stored securely on CPOMS.

When making a record of a disclosure on CPOMS, staff will include:

- The context in which the disclosure was made
- Any questions asked, or support offered by the member of staff

- The pupil's own words recorded accurately

8. Confidentiality

Staff must not promise to keep a mental-health disclosure secret. Information will be shared with appropriate colleagues where this is necessary to protect the pupil, understand their needs or arrange effective and continuing support. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and, wherever appropriate, the pupil will be told what will be shared, with whom and why.

A disclosure cannot be kept secret because:

- Being the sole person responsible for a student's mental health could have a negative impact on the member of staff's own mental health and wellbeing.
- The support put in place for the student must not be dependent on the member of staff being at school.
- Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the student in question.

Staff should always share disclosures with the DSL only. If information needs to be shared with other members of staff or external professionals, it will be done on a need-to-know basis.

Before sharing information disclosed by a pupil with a third party, the member of staff will discuss it with the pupil and explain:

- Who they will share the information with.
- What information they will share.
- Why they need to share that information.

Staff will attempt to receive consent from the pupil to share their information, but the safety of the pupil comes first.

Parents or carers will normally be informed and involved where a pupil requires mental health support. Where there is a safeguarding concern, the DSL will decide when and how parents or carers should be contacted. Contact may be delayed where it could place the pupil at additional risk or undermine the safeguarding response.

9. Supporting Students

9.1 Universal Support for all Students

As part of our school's commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all students, our school offers support to students by:

- Raising awareness of mental health during assemblies, form time and the Flourish programme.
- Signposting all students to sources of online support via our school website and the Thrive Hub VLE.
- Having open discussions about mental health during lessons.
- Providing students with avenues to provide feedback on any elements of our school that is negatively impacting their mental health.
- Using appropriate outcome measures, including CORE-YP where suitable, with pupils receiving targeted support to establish a baseline, monitor progress and inform review. Measures will be considered alongside pupil voice, attendance, engagement and professional observations.
- Offering pastoral support, e.g. through Heads of Year.
- Making classrooms a safe space to discuss mental health and wellbeing through interventions.

9.2 Assessing What Further Support is Needed

If a pupil is identified as having a mental health need, the DSL and Head of Year will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to assessing the support our school can provide.

Our school will offer support in cycles of:

- Assessing what the student's mental health needs are.
- Creating a plan to provide support.
- Taking the actions set out in the plan.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the support offered.

10. Internal and External Support

We offer a graduated and layered model of support including:

10.1 Internal Support

- Mental Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors (Staff and Pupils)
- School Counselling (Mrs Hart, Karen Brooks – Brooks Counselling or a trainee counsellor for pupils aged 16+)
- SWiS intervention
- SEND referrals
- Pastoral/Head of Year-led mentoring

10.2 External Referrals

Where additional support is required, we may refer to:

- Branch Wirral
- CYPMHS
- GP or Paediatrician
- Mental Health Charities (e.g. Young Minds, Kooth)
- Family Help Services
- Mental Health Support Team - MHST involvement does not replace CYPMHS, emergency medical treatment or safeguarding referrals where these are required.

10.3 Individual Healthcare Plans (IHCPs)

Individual Healthcare Plans (IHCPs) are intended to support pupils with physical and mental health conditions, to manage their conditions. They lay out what needs to be done, when and by whom. They should be confidential, but easily accessible on Provision Mapper to everyone who needs to refer to them.

IHCPs are written in collaboration with the student (if appropriate), their parent/legal guardian and any other relevant professionals.

The student's IHCP will contain the following details:

- The mental health issue (and its triggers, signs, symptoms and treatments)
- The student's needs, resulting from the condition
- Specific support for the student's educational, social and emotional needs
- The level of support needed
- Who will provide the support
- Who in our school needs to be aware of the child's condition

In many cases, an Individual Mental Health Support Plan (IMHSP) or a Safety Plan will be used to support the pupil.

10.4 Making External Referrals

If a student's needs cannot be met by the internal offer our school provides, our school will make, or encourage parents/legal guardians to make, a referral for external support.

A student could be referred to:

- Their GP or a Paediatrician
- CAMHS
- Mental Health Charities (e.g. Samaritans, Mind, Young Minds, Kooth)
- Local Counselling/Advice Services (refer to Family Help provision on Wirral Safeguarding Partnership toolbox)

11. Supporting and Collaborating with Parents/Legal Guardians

We will work with parents/carers to support pupils' mental health by:

- Asking parents/carers to inform us of any mental health needs their child is experiencing, so we can offer the right support.
- Informing parents/carers of mental health concerns that we have about their child.
- Engaging with parents/carers to understand their mental health and wellbeing issues, as well as that of their child, and support them accordingly to make sure there is holistic support for them.

- Highlighting sources of information and support about mental health and wellbeing on our school website, including the Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.
- Liaising with parents/carers to discuss strategies that can help promote positive mental health in their child.
- Providing guidance to parents/carers on navigating and accessing relevant local mental health services or other sources of support (e.g. parent/carer forums).
- Keeping parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their child/ward is learning about in Flourish and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.
- When informing parents/carers about any mental health concerns we have about their child, we will endeavour to do this face-to-face, however if this means that there will be a delay in support, then this will be conducted by telephone.
- Meetings may be complex, so our school will ensure that parents/carers are given time to reflect on what has been discussed, and that lines of communication are kept open at the end of the meeting.
- Produce a record of what was discussed; action plans agreed upon in the meeting will be recorded on the relevant plan.
- If appropriate, an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHCP), Mental Health Support Plan (MHSP) or Safety Plan will be created in collaboration with parents/carers.

12. Supporting Peers

Watching a friend experience poor mental health can be very challenging for pupils. Pupils may also be at risk of learning and developing unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. We will offer support to all pupils impacted by mental health, directly and indirectly and review the support offered on a case-by-case basis.

Support might include:

- Strategies they can use to support their friends
- Things they should avoid doing/saying
- Warning signs to look out for
- Signposting to sources of external support

13. Signposting

Sources of support are displayed around our school and on the school website/Thrive Hub VLE, so pupils and parents/carers are aware of how they can get help. The Mental Health Lead and Pastoral Team will be available to provide further information to students and parents/legal guardians if they want to learn more about what support is available.

14. Whole School Approach to Promoting Mental Health Awareness

14.1 Mental Health Taught in Flourish:

We follow the [PSHE Association Guidance](#) on teaching Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing.

The aim of the Mental Health and Wellbeing aspects of our Flourish curriculum offer is to provide age-appropriate guidance to students. The subject matter covered will equip our students with information that will enable them to make informed choices when dealing with health and wellbeing.

Students are taught to:

- Develop healthy coping strategies
- Challenge misconceptions around mental health
- Understand their own emotional state
- Keep themselves safe

14.2 Creating a Positive Atmosphere around Mental Health

Staff will create an open culture around mental health by:

- Discussing mental health with students in order to break down stigma.
- Encouraging pupils to disclose when their mental health is deteriorating.

15. Training

All staff will be offered training so they:

- Have a good understanding of what students' mental health needs are.
- Know how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health.
- Know a clear process to follow if they identify a student in need of help.

16. Support for Staff

We recognise that supporting a student experiencing poor mental health can affect that staff member's own mental health and wellbeing. To help with this, we:

- Treat mental health concerns seriously.
- Offer staff counselling sessions.
- Offer occupational health support.
- Support staff experiencing poor mental health themselves.
- Create a pleasant and supportive work environment.
- Offer an employee assistance programme. This confidential service is offered through Education Support <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/> All staff at Upton Hall School are offered support for issues, both at work and at home. Financial guidance is offered as well as signposting to support.

17. Monitoring Arrangements

This Policy will be reviewed annually and be approved by the Board of Governors.