Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy & Strategy

Overley Hall School

Policy Reviewer: Bev Doran
Date of Review: 21.04.2026
Date of Next Review: 20.04.2027

Mental Health Lead: Mandy Peever
Mental Health & Wellbeing First Aider: Pam Clarke

Introduction

Everyone experiences life challenges or difficulties that can make us vulnerable. At times, anyone may need additional support to maintain or develop good mental health. Overley Hall School supports children and young people with complex needs, including severe learning difficulties and autism. Many of our pupils experience challenges with emotional regulation, sensory processing, communication, social understanding and flexibility of thinking.

This policy has been designed to promote the mental health, wellbeing and safety of children and young people, whilst recognising and supporting the challenges they may face on a day-to-day basis. It also recognises the importance of supporting the emotional wellbeing and mental health of staff and families, acknowledging that a healthy school community is essential to positive outcomes for pupils.

Definition

The World Health Organisation (2024) defines mental health as:

“A state of mental wellbeing that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn and work well, and contribute to their community.”

Health is defined as:

“A state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

In the context of our pupils’ complex needs, everyday stresses may be magnified, making proactive and responsive mental health support essential.

Rationale

There is a clear link between emotional wellbeing, physical health and success in learning. Promoting positive mental health enables children and young people to develop resilience, regulate emotions, form healthy relationships and access learning meaningfully. At Overley Hall School, emotional health and wellbeing underpin our ethos, curriculum, behaviour approaches and safeguarding responsibilities.

Values

At Overley Hall School we believe that:

- All children and young people have the right to be educated in an environment that supports, enhances and promotes positive mental health and wellbeing.
- All staff have the right to work in an environment that recognises and supports emotional wellbeing.
- Positive relationships are central to emotional health, learning and development.
- Mental health is everyone's responsibility.

Roles and Responsibilities

Proprietor / Governing Body

- Maintains strategic oversight of mental health and wellbeing.
- Ensures this policy is implemented, monitored and reviewed.
- Receives updates on wellbeing trends and impact as part of governance monitoring.

Headteacher

- Holds overall responsibility for mental health and wellbeing.
- Ensures this policy is embedded within school practice, safeguarding and development planning.

Mental Health Lead

- Leads the school's mental health and wellbeing strategy.
- Coordinates support for pupils, staff and families.
- Liaises with external professionals.
- Monitors emerging themes and reports to senior leadership.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Ensures safeguarding procedures are followed where mental health concerns indicate risk.
- Works closely with the Mental Health Lead where concerns overlap.

All Staff

- Promote a culture of emotional safety and wellbeing.
- Remain alert to changes in behaviour or emotional presentation.
- Share concerns early and follow agreed procedures.
- Escalate concerns where there is risk of harm.

Safeguarding and Mental Health

Mental health and wellbeing concerns may be indicators of safeguarding need.

Where a mental health concern suggests that a child or young person may be at risk of harm, **safeguarding procedures take precedence at all times**. Staff must follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

Creating a Mentally Healthy Environment

A mentally healthy environment at Overley Hall School is one where:

Pupils:

- Feel safe, valued and understood.
- Are supported to regulate emotions and develop independence.
- Have opportunities to contribute, celebrate success and develop self-worth.
- Can access appropriate support when needed.

Staff:

- Feel valued and supported.
- Have access to wellbeing strategies, supervision and CPD.
- Are able to reflect and access support proactively.
- Have their work-life balance recognised.

Parents and Carers:

- Are welcomed and valued as partners.
- Are listened to and supported.
- Know how to access advice and external support.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Pathway

Universal Support (All Pupils)

- Regulation-informed environments
- Strong relationships and consistent routines
- Flexible curriculum and timetable approaches

Targeted Support

- Concerns shared within class teams
- Advice from the Mental Health Lead
- Adjusted strategies and interventions
- Parents/carers informed and involved

Specialist / External Support

- Referral to appropriate external professionals
- Multi-agency planning and review

Safeguarding

- Immediate escalation to the DSL where risk is identified

Monitoring, Review and Measuring Impact

The impact of this policy is monitored through:

- Termly leadership review
- Feedback from pupils, staff and parents
- Behaviour, attendance and wellbeing patterns
- Staff supervision and wellbeing reviews
- Internal and external referral analysis
- Evaluation of CPD and training impact

Findings inform:

- School Development Planning
- Adaptations to provision
- Training priorities

This policy is reviewed every two years, or sooner where required.

Strategy for Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health

Overley Hall School adopts a **three-pillar approach**:

1. Communication

Maintaining open, honest and inclusive communication across the school community.

2. Feedback

Regular feedback through questionnaires, wellbeing committees, line-management and reviews.

3. Flexibility

Recognising that wellbeing is individual and responsive support is essential.

Conclusion

This policy reflects Overley Hall School's commitment to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing for pupils, staff and families. It provides a robust framework for practice, safeguarding, partnership working and continuous improvement, ensuring wellbeing is embedded across the life of the school.

The promotion of positive mental health is everyone's business.