

# West Coker Primary School



## Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

**Approved by the Headteacher of West Coker Primary School in  
February 2026**

**Headteacher**

*Phil Hyland*

**Proposed Date of Future Review February 2029**

Our Core Christian Values of Respect, Hope, Community, Wisdom and Kindness run through everything we do and help ensure that our pupils flourish and leave our school as conscientious, well-equipped citizens of the future. Together, we seek to embed a supportive, thoughtful and considerate atmosphere throughout that allows everyone to thrive.

## Policy Statement

At West Coker CofE VC Primary School, it is our vision that all children are entitled to develop to their fullest potential academically, socially, emotionally and into healthy individuals. This will enable each child to grow in confidence and be able to fully participate in everything that goes on in the wider community with confidence. It is widely recognised that a child's emotional health and wellbeing influences their cognitive development and learning, as well as their physical & social health and their mental wellbeing in adulthood. The department for Education recognises that, in order to help their pupils succeed: schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy.

*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 Organisation)*

In our school, our Christian Values shape all we do:



We aim to promote positive mental health in our school community including our pupils, staff, parents and governors. We pursue this aim using universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils. We aim to develop resilience among students by teaching them coping strategies and acknowledging that experiencing a variety of feelings is normal.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises with staff trained to notice changes in mental health across the school community.

Our belief as a school is, that by developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health procedures, we can promote a safe and stable environment for children and families affected both directly and indirectly by mental health issues.

## **Scope**

This policy 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 other relevant school policies.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of mental health
- 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

## **Lead Members of Staff**

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

**Philip Hyland** - Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher

**Rebecca Kilburn** - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and Senior Teacher

**Melanie Leeson** - SENCo

**Rebecca Edwards** - Senior Mental Health Lead, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mental Health First Aider, Thrive Practitioner and Pastoral Lead

**Daniel Clapp** - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

## **Pupil Identification**

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the school SENCo 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 a member of the school Safeguarding Team. 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 overseen by Melanie Leeson, SENCo and/or Rebecca Edwards, Senior Mental Health Lead.

### Assess, Plan, Do, review

It is helpful to draw up an individual APDR for pupils who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health and include them on the school's SEN register. If there is a concern, staff will complete with parents a 'cause for concern form' to initiate this process. This should be written collaboratively with key school staff, the pupil, the parents and any relevant health professionals. This will need to include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Details of any professionals involved
- Details of any assessments that have been carried out
- Strengths and needs of the pupil
- Details of any medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play in supporting the pupil and/or their family

Where appropriate, the pupil may also need a Positive Handling Plan. This will be written by key school staff in conjunction with the SENCo/Senior Mental Health Lead, the pupil and parents/carers.

### Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs, which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing difficulties. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the school SENDCo/Senior Mental Health Lead or a member of the Safeguarding Team in the first instance.

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

### Managing disclosures

This pertains to the school's safeguarding responsibilities as describes in KCSIE 2025 and the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2025

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 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.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded on MyConcern. This written record should include:

- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the SENCo/Senior Mental Health Lead, the Safeguarding Team (DSL/DDSL), key staff working with the child and parents (unless the child's safety may be compromised) who will offer support and advice about next steps.

### 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 are 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 we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner, which helps rather than harms.

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our children to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy safe are included as part of our PSHCE curriculum and embedded throughout our school learning community in line with the DfE RSE guidance (note this is statutory from 2020)

So that by the end of Primary School pupils should know:

- That mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health.
- That there is a normal range of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) and scale of emotions that all humans experience in relation to different experiences and situations.
- How to recognise and talk about their emotions, including having a varied vocabulary of words to use when talking about their own and others' feelings.
- How to judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate.
- The benefits of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation, voluntary and service-based activity on mental wellbeing and happiness.
- Simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest, time spent with friends and family and the benefits of hobbies and interests.
- Isolation and loneliness can affect children and that it is very important for children to discuss their feelings with an adult and seek support.
- That bullying (including cyberbullying) has a negative and often lasting impact on mental wellbeing.
- Where and how to seek support (including recognising the triggers for seeking support), including whom in school they should speak to if they are worried about their own or someone else's mental wellbeing or ability to control their emotions (including issues arising online).
- It is common for people to experience mental ill health. For many people who do, the problems can be resolved if the right support is made available, especially if accessed early enough.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are 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 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 school and in the local community. This will be communicated via our teaching, letters, and discussions with families, our school website, social media, posters and leaflets.

We will display relevant sources of support and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil seeking help by ensuring 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

### Confidentiality

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

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

We should never share information about a pupil without first telling them. Ideally, we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with a member of the Safeguarding Team and/or a parent. Particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm.

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

Parents should be informed if there are concerns about their mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves (age dependent). If this is the case, the pupil should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. 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 which puts the child in immediate danger, parents should not be informed, but the Safeguarding Team must be informed immediately.

### Working with Parents/Carers and the school community

We recognise the family plays an important role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring that all parents are aware of who to talk to if they have any concerns about their child's mental health and wellbeing
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.)
- Make the school policy easily accessible to parents and carers
- Keep parents informed about the topics that children are learning about in school.
- Carry out parent workshops/information sessions to raise awareness of mental health and well-being.

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health.

In order to support parents, we will:

Inform parents about a specific incident when it is considered appropriate to do so, taking a sensitive and thoughtful approach.

Before sharing information with parents, we will consider the following questions on a case-by-case basis:

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral.
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, and other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues, and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they

process the information. The meeting will be recorded on Insight or MyConcern if appropriate.

### Pupil Wellbeing Interventions

|                              |  |   |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Whole School Approach</b> | PSHE curriculum  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupil voice - communication skills (School Council - Emotional literacy skills)</li> <li>• Engagement in individual SEN one page profiles and home school contact such as (TAF involvement- PFSA support, CAMHS, Educational Psychologist).</li> <li>• Self-regulation strategies linked to behaviour management, CPD training and staff meeting updates. Mindfulness</li> </ul> |
|                              | Teaching and Learning approaches                                     |   |
|                              | Holistic/ Multi-agency approach (APDR and Parental Support Advisors) |   |
|                              | Class screens and action plan from Thrive                            |   |
| <b>Targeted support</b>      | Well-being interventions   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zones of Regulation check ins</li> <li>• Thrive drop ins</li> <li>• Individual action plans</li> <li>• Class group sessions focusing on emotional wellbeing outcomes.</li> <li>• Personalised differentiated learning opportunities.</li> </ul>  |

### Staff identification

It is recognised at West Coker CofE VC Primary School that promoting staff health and emotional well-being should be an integral part of the whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. Therefore, training and signposting to materials about mental health and emotional wellbeing is available for all staff. An open-door policy to senior leadership is always made available if staff is in need of speaking to someone about any issues of concern. Supervision and appraisal will allow for mutual communication about personal health and emotional wellbeing if both felt it is deemed necessary.

## Staff Wellbeing Support and Interventions

|                              |   |  |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Whole School Approach</b> | A senior leadership team and governing body committed to provide all staff with listening support in relation to emotional wellbeing and recognition of this within performance management / appraisal discussions. | Open door policy<br>Posters<br>Signposting to additional support |
|                              | Work life Support and Flexibility for personal wellbeing appointments within school time.   | CPD courses  |
| <b>Whole School offer</b>    | Emotional Wellbeing Staff meetings and Inset Days   | Planned staff meeting  |
|                              | Carefirst Confidential Counselling Service  |  |
| <b>Targeted support</b>      | Debriefing/support sessions for staff working in classes for pupils with complex medical needs or challenging behaviour from the Head Teacher, Deputy Head and SENDCo/Senior Mental Health Lead.                    |  |
|                              | Significant incidents - debriefing/counselling with a trained professional for all staff involved in a significant incident   |  |

### Staff 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 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 training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

### Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in February 2029.