



**Villa Real School**  
*together we achieve*

# Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy 2025

Responsibility: Natalie Fitzpatrick

Date: January 2025

Date to be reviewed: January 2027

## **Policy Statement**

At Villa Real, our vision is for every child and young person to develop academically, spiritually and emotionally to their fullest potential. We aim to nurture and develop our children's wellbeing and self-worth, with a view to enabling them in the long term to participate in the wider community: laying the foundations for adult life.

*"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*

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff as well as our student body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students.

## **Scope**

This policy describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors. This policy should be read in conjunction with our Pupil Voice Policy, PSHCE Policy, SEND Policy, Behaviour Policy, Anti Bullying Policy and Autism Spectrum Disorder Policy along with any relevant information pertaining to individual medical issues impacting upon mental health and wellbeing. Our Child Protection Policy also prompts immediate action relating to wider concerns of vulnerability.

## **The Policy Aims to:**

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils/ students
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils/ students suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/ carers
- Enable staff to increase their awareness of good mental health in order to support pupils/ students to feel good, experience positive emotions like happiness, contentment, enjoyment, curiosity, engagement and security
- Provide support to staff to assist pupils/ students with making positive relationships and social connections, to feel in control of their life, have a sense of purpose, make good choices, foster self-regulation and promote pupil voice so that they are able to function well in the world
- Provide a holistic and multi-agency approach that will be identified in the children's Individual Education and Health Care Plans

## Lead Members of Staff

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

- Jill Bowe - Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection
- Suzanne Bailey – Chair of Governing Body / Safeguarding Governor
- Samantha Dawson – Looked After Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Deputy, Mathematics Co-ordinator, Careers Lead, Behaviour Lead
- Natalie Fitzpatrick – Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead and Designated Safeguarding Deputy
- Alex Morris – SENCo, PSHCE Lead, Designated Safeguarding Deputy
- Damien Dimmick – Assistant SENCo, PE Coordinator, Designated Safeguarding Deputy, Parental Engagement Lead
- Jamie-Leigh Hall – Designated Safeguarding Deputy
- Emma Baker – Kidsafe Lead
- Jane Liddle and Vicky Shaw – HLTAs for Behaviour
- Leanne Mosey – HLTA for Pupil Voice

To promote first aid for mental health and wellbeing, we follow the guidance taken from the national minimum standards and the eight key principles identified in 'Promoting Children and Young People Emotional Health and Wellbeing' (2021).



Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Alex Morris, SENCo.

### **Individual Health Care Plans and Education Health Care Plans:**

All pupils/ students who have a medical need have an IHCP and every pupil/student in school has an EHCP with annual reviews, both of which detail information regarding pupils/ students who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This is drawn up involving the pupil/ student, parents/ carers and relevant health professionals / school nursing team. This includes the role that the school can play in supporting pupils/ students with mental health problems.

### **Teaching about Mental Health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils/ students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHCE and RSHE curriculum and the wider curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of each cohort and Real Curriculum Pathways.

We follow The PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

### **Warning Signs:**

School staff may become aware of signs which indicate a pupil/ student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with Jill Bowe, Alex Morris, SENCo and Natalie Fitzpatrick, Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead.

Possible signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or 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
- Reluctance to take part in 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

## Pupil Wellbeing Interventions:

	Approaches	Interventions
Whole school	<p>Curriculum overview to reflect teaching and learning opportunities for promoting good mental health and wellbeing</p> <p>Staff meeting updates.</p> <p>Nursing Team Coffee Mornings</p> <p>VRSA coffee mornings</p> <p>Parents' Evenings</p> <p>Info available via School Website</p> <p>CPDL Training</p> <p>Relational Approach</p> <p>Level 4 Mental Health Lead accreditation – CPDL provided to staff</p> <p>Wellbeing events and promotions</p>	<p>EHCP reviews and 'My Plans' Outcomes.</p> <p>Emotional literacy skills within ELKAN</p> <p>TAFs, CiC meetings</p> <p>CAHMS clinic</p> <p>Future Steps self-regulation Programmes linked to behaviour management</p> <p>Virtual School Heads.</p> <p>Please refer to our 3 Tier Model</p> <p>Relational approach – whole school focus on Developing relationships and trust</p>
Targeted to individuals	<p>Wellbeing Interventions – 'Kidsafe' / 'Active Listeners'</p> <p>Bespoke curriculum</p> <p>Bespoke environment</p> <p>Use of sensory integration / quiet rooms</p> <p>Key workers</p> <p>Relational Approach</p>	<p>1:1 sessions for specific purposes focussed on individual wellbeing outcomes.</p> <p>Pupil Premium intervention when appropriate.</p> <p>Personalised differentiated learning opportunities and curriculum pathways.</p> <p>Individual EHCP, IHCP.</p> <p>CiC reviews and PEPs.</p> <p>Relational Approach – responding and calming, repairing and restoring relationships and trust</p> <p>Headteacher clinics</p>

## Signposting:

We will ensure that staff, pupils/ students and parents/ carers are aware of and how to access sources of support within school and in the local community.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as hall, meeting room, staff room and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of

support to pupils/ students within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil/ student help-seeking by ensuring pupils/ students understand:

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

### **Managing disclosures**

A pupil/ student 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/ student 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 first thoughts should be of the pupil's/ student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded on CPOMS which alert the designated safeguarding lead. Urgent concerns must be passed on to SMT before the pupil/ student leaves school at the end of the day.

### **Confidentiality**

If it is necessary for staff to pass concerns on, then the pupil/ student will be told who they are going to talk to, what they are going to tell them and why they need to tell them. It is not always possible to do this with consent due to the pupil/ student having limited communication or cognitive ability to understand/ give consent for staff to share information. Staff may therefore share disclosed information without pupil/ student consent in order to comply with safe guarding and prevent harm. Disclosure is shared on a 'need to know' or safeguarding basis. This also ensures continuity of care in staff absence and provides an extra source of ideas and support. This should be explained to the pupil/ student and discussed with them so they know who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

### **Working with Parents/ Carers:**

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents/ carers, staff need to be sensitive in their approach. SMT will inform parents/ carers themselves or identify staff to do so. Before disclosing to parents, the following needs to be considered on a case by case basis:

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen - at school, home or somewhere neutral?

- Who should be present – parents/ carers, the pupil/ student, key workers, social workers, school nursing team etc.?
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents/ carers to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. Staff should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent/ carer time to reflect. Staff should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets, notes to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents/ carers can also be helpful too, e.g. parent/ carer helplines and forums.

Staff should always provide a clear means of contacting school with further questions and consider booking in a follow-up meeting or phone call right away as parents/ carers often have many questions as they process the information. Each meeting should be finished with agreed next steps and a brief record of the meeting recorded on CPOMS.

### **Working with All Parents/ Carers:**

Parents/ carers 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/ carers, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents/ carers are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents/ carers
- Share ideas about how parents/ carers can support positive mental health in their children through our regular parents' evenings.
- Keep parents/ carers informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHCE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

### **Supporting Peers:**

When a pupil/ student 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 depending upon level of cognition and understanding. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the student who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support each other
- Things friends should avoid doing or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend may need help (e.g. signs of relapse)

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 the difficult emotions they may be feeling

## **Training**

Whole staff training includes recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of regular Keeping children safe in education child protection training, which allows staff to be current and up to date with national trends and concerns, Durham Resilience Strategy with The Educational Psychology Team,' Self Harm' from LDCAHMs, 'Emotional Well Being' training from school nurses, local and nationally relevant topics of Mental Health and wellbeing are offered to staff by the Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead or they will seek additional outside agencies where necessary.

Staff are encouraged to register with the 'The MindEd learning portal', [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk) a virtual learning environment which also provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue. 'MindEd for families' is also available for parents/ carers to access through our school website.

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