

*'...those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not
grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.'* Isaiah 40:31



connect | nurture | aspire | learn | excel | hope



Mental Health Strategy Including Self-harm

Document Information	Date/source of Policy	Responsibility
Date of review	February 2023	Well-being team
Date of new review	September 2024	Well-being team

"Our School is an inclusive family, where each individual is respected and nurtured. Through our Christian values we develop friendship within our school community and beyond, developing compassion, confidence and resilience in all. Our curriculum fosters aspiration, creativity, curiosity and determination enabling all to flourish."

Confidence **Determination** **Faith** **Friendship** **Respect**

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1. Rationale

At Charing CE Primary School, we are committed to supporting the positive mental health and wellbeing of our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers). We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued. We endeavour to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress and aim to ensure that they are supported to reach their potential or to 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.

At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

We have been awarded the 'Wellbeing in Schools award' accredited by the NCB (National Children's Bureau) which recognises that there are 4 key principles that drive mental health and wellbeing in schools. These are:

- That mental health and wellbeing are a continuum.
- That as a school we experience and manage emotional issues daily

- That emotional wellbeing covers a range of dimensions, such as resilience, character building, relationships and self-esteem.
- That to create a positive school culture requires a whole school approach which engages the whole school community.

Our vision for mental health and wellbeing at Charing's ties into our Christian vision and the award process by ensuring that we continually promote and develop the mental health and resilience of our school community, linking to article 24: every child has the right to the best possible health.

2. Definition of Mental Health and wellbeing:

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing

“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”.

3. The Aims and Intentions of our Mental Health Strategy

We aim to;

- Remain informed, inspired and influenced by national policy guidance within the DfE and Public Health England.
- Ensure a whole school approach to development and delivery.
- Ensure a whole community contribution to development and delivery, including pupils and their families, stakeholders, partner agencies in statutory and charitable organisations and the local extended community.
- Connect with other schools in our local Multi Academy Trust to share good practice.

We will;

- Ensure that this Mental Health Strategy complements all other current school strategies and policies.
- Review the Mental Health Strategy when required.
- Ensure there is clear learning on our curriculum regarding emotional wellbeing and mental health across all key stages.

At Charing Primary School we embrace our role, alongside our families, the community and with our wider partners, in contributing to the developing emotional wellbeing of our pupils and their learning about being healthy, from a physical and mental health perspective.

4. Key staff supporting Mental Health

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

Wellbeing Lead – Tom Bird (Headteacher)

Safeguarding Lead – Izzy Hammond (Inclusion Manager)

Named Mental Health Lead – Tracey Nunn (FLO)
Mental Health Intervention Lead – Nikki Hodson (ELSA)
Named Mental Health Governor –

Our Mental Health Team:

- Lead and work with all staff to co-ordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Work with the PSHE leader re: teaching about mental health.
- Provide advice and support to staff and organises training and updates.
- Liaise with mental health services and makes individual referrals to them.

5. How our ethos supports Mental Health and wellbeing

At Charing CE Primary School we take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health, aiming to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to work in a pro-active way to avoid problems arising. We do this by:

- Creating and applying consistent ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and well-being.
- Helping children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- Helping children to feel comfortable about sharing any concerns or worries.
- Teaching children emotional skills and an awareness of mental health so that they understand their emotions and feelings better.
- Promoting self-esteem and ensuring children understand their importance in the world.
- Helping children to be resilient learners and to manage setbacks.
- Identifying children who have mental health challenges and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services, parents and carers.
- Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.
- Developing an open culture where it's normal to talk about mental health.
- Every class using meditation/calming music and mindfulness activities daily
- Every class having a reflective corner for children to access.
- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making.
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others.
- Providing opportunities to reflect.
- Enabling access to appropriate support.
- Mental Health and PSHE for all year groups
- Mental Health Awareness week

6. Supporting a Pupil's Mental Health

a. Early Identification and Warning Signs

All staff will be vigilant in identifying a range of possible difficulties that may be contributing to a pupil's poor mental health, including:

- Attendance and punctuality, including an increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Relationships, including becoming socially withdrawn

- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators, including repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstance
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators
- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope

School staff may also 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 any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the designated child protection and safeguarding officer or the emotional wellbeing lead as appropriate. All concerns are reported to the designated adults through Bromcom. Needs are assessed through a triage approach with SLT, class teachers and DSL team members to ensure the child gets the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service, as quickly as possible.

b. Universal Support

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves 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're teaching but we will also use the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

c. Targeted Support

The school recognises that many behavioural and emotional problems can be supported within the school, with advice from external professionals, and that some pupils may need more intensive support at times. Charing Primary School has a range of potential interventions to support individual's needs, as well as links with external agencies.

- Nurture Provision
- Lego Therapy
- ELSA
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement.
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties including attachment disorder.
- Nurture groups to focus on mental health, resilience and wellbeing.
- Circle time approaches or 'circle of friends' activities.
- Managing feelings resources e.g. 'worry boxes' and 'worry eaters'.
- Managing emotions resources.
- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire
- The Boxall Profile
- Emotional literacy scales

d. Intensive Support - Working with specialist services

As part of our provision, the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing. Children may be referred to one of the following services for additional support.

- Behaviour support LIFT and STLS
- Educational Psychology Services
- CYPMHS (child and young person mental health service - NELFT)
- School Nursing Service
- Children's and Family Services by front door referral
- Therapists
- Family support workers
- Counselling Services

e. Working with parents and carers.

Parents or carers can approach their child/children's class teacher if they have mental health concerns. We are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers. We recognise the important role the family plays in influencing the emotional health and wellbeing of pupils in the school. We also recognise that working in partnership may sometimes mean providing support and resources to those families that are struggling with meeting life's challenges.

To support parents and carers we will:

- Provide information online on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- Share ideas about how parents and carers can support positive mental health in their children.
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics taught in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this at home.

When a concern has been raised, a DSL will:

- Contact parents to discuss concern (there may be cases when parents and carers cannot be involved due to child protection issues.)
- Discuss any relevant referrals to external agencies.
- Signpost parents to further information or provide resources to take away.
- Create a chronology of actions and events.
- Agree mental health care and protection plan where appropriate including clear next steps.
- Discuss how parents can support their child through strategies or signposts to parenting support groups.
- Early Help multi agency support eg Family Intervention Workers, School Nurse, Children's Centre
- Transitional meetings and visits with Nurseries, Secondary Schools and Home Visits.

7. Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing

At Charing Primary School, we place the wellbeing and development of staff as a high priority, believing all school staff play a vital role in developing and supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of the pupils. We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support.

8. Staff Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular safeguarding 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 to developing situations with one or more pupils.

9. Self Harm

In keeping with the school's values, vision and aims, this protocol aims to address the issue of self-harm.

- How to deal with students who self-harm and how to offer support in the short and long term.
- To offer support depending upon the individual needs of the student.
- To help students improve their self-esteem and emotional literacy.
- How to support teachers who come into contact with students who self-harm.
- How to prevent self-harm from spreading within the school.
- To have clear guidelines for staff – who needs to be informed, when do parents and external agencies need to be contacted.
- Education about self-harm for students and staff.

a. What is Self-Harm?

Self-harm is when someone deliberately hurts or injures themselves. It is a continuum ranging from a behaviour which has strong suicidal intent to behaviour which is part of a coping mechanism. It can be used to describe cutting, scratching, burning, taking overdoses, punching oneself, substance abuse, self-poisoning, unsafe sex etc.

b. Common Problems Preceding Self-Harm

- Difficulties with parents / boy or girlfriends / siblings / friends.
- School problems / bullying
- Mental health issues e.g. depression, eating disorders.
- Low self esteem
- Sexual problems
- Physical ill health
- Alcohol / drug abuse
- Physical / sexual abuse

c. Possible Reasons / Motives Underlying Self-Harm

- To die

- To escape from unbearable distress
- To change the behaviour of others
- To show desperation to others
- To get back at other people or make them feel guilty
- To relieve tension
- To seek help
- To self-punish

d. All Staff are expected to:

- Listen to students who are experiencing emotional distress in a calm and non-judgmental way.
- Think carefully about how to communicate with the child.
- Understand that the child probably can't tell you why they did it or what they are feeling. They need adults to make sense of these difficult and overwhelming times.
- Report the self-harm incident to a DSL immediately and report the incident on Bromcom.
- Not make promises e.g. assuring confidentiality which cannot be kept. Reassure the student that in order to receive help and find more helpful ways to cope with problems others may need to know.
- Guide the student towards wanting to make positive changes.
- Promote problem-solving techniques and non-harmful ways to deal with emotional distress.
- Provide accurate information about self-harming and awareness about associated mental health problems.
- Be aware of health and safety issues such as first aid if the incident has occurred in school.

e. The DSL will:

- Keep accurate records of incidents of self-harm and concerns.
- Liaise with local services about help available for young people who self-harm.
- Keep up-to-date information about self-harm, e.g. info leaflets from Young Minds.
- Liaise with the student's teacher or Headteacher.
- Contact the parents at the appropriate time. Involve the student in this process.
- Inform the parent about the appropriate help and support that is available for their child. Monitor the student's progress, e.g. school work, general presentation, following the incident.
- Know when to seek help to deal with their own feelings and distress.
- Refer the family to Early Help, through the Front Door service
- Refer the child to CYMPHS

f. Students will be expected to:

- Not display open wounds/injuries. These must be dressed appropriately.
- Talk to the appropriate staff member if they are in emotional distress.

- Alert a teacher if they suspect a fellow pupil of being suicidal or at serious risk of harm to themselves, and know when confidentiality must be broken.

g. Parents and Carers will be encouraged to:

- Endorse the schools approach to dealing with self-harm and education/awareness raising.
- Work in partnership with the school with a shared plan for supporting their child.
- Ask for help with their own emotions.
- Seek professional help offered by the school and outside agencies.
- Use resources available through school, or through recommended websites such as: mentalhealthmattersinschools.org.uk

h. Signs of self-harming:

- Changes in clothing to cover parts of the body e.g. wearing long sleeve tops
- Reluctant to participate in previously enjoyed physical activities, especially those that involve wearing shorts or swimwear
- Changes in sleeping habits
- Changes in eating habits
- Changes in levels of activity or mood
- Isolating from friends and family

i. Further information is available from:

- ChildLine – provides a free national helpline for young people, free confidential advice on a range of problems: 0800 1111
- LifeSIGNS (Self Injury Guidance and Network Support) – An online, user-lead voluntary organisation to raise awareness about self-injury and provide information and support to people of all ages affected by self-injury.
- National Self-harm Network - UK charity offering support, advice and advocacy services to people affected by self harm directly or in a care role.
- YoungMinds – provides information and advice on child mental health issues and a Parents Helpline 0800 802 5544.
- NHS Direct – a helpline with health advice provided by NHS nurses: 0845 4647
- Samaritans – a telephone helpline and email service for anyone who is feeling upset, worried or suicidal: 0845 790 9090 email: jo@samaritans.org
- School nursing team – School can contact and refer to the School Nursing Team