

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY 2024 - 2026



'Aim ever higher'

Together we learn and grow



Philippians 4:13 "I can do all this through him who gives me strength"

Context

Leigh Church of England Academy sits in an area of significant social and economic deprivation in Coventry. There are high levels of crime, a low number of working households, a high prevalence of drug and alcohol misuse and a high level of medical needs. A significant number of factors within the community affect the families at Leigh and therefore the lives of our pupils. We have approximately 52% of pupils eligible for pupil premium - well above the national average of 25.5%. Removing barriers to learning is complex. At Leigh, our skilled staff, who are committed to meeting the needs of all pupils, work in partnership with parents, carers, community leaders and outside agencies in order to attempt to overcome barriers, providing a safe and secure space where learning can happen, pupils can develop and everyone can 'Aim ever higher'.

Intent

At Leigh Church of England Academy, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. Our supportive and nurturing ethos is at the heart of everything we do. Our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued. At our academy 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. Understanding and promoting self-regulation with all our stakeholders - pupils, parents and staff - is the thread that runs through our approaches to mental health and well-being. If we are all able to better understand, manage and regulate our emotions and responses, our wellbeing and that of those around us will improve.

At our school we:

- help every child to understand their emotions and feelings better
- teach strategies and tools that children can rely on to help manage their feelings and responses (self-regulation)
- help every child feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- help every child socially to form and maintain relationships
- promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count
- encourage children to be confident and comfortable
- help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks through a range of taught strategies including self-regulation

We promote a mentally healthy environment through

- 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 and spaces to reflect
- Access to appropriate support that meets their needs

We pursue our aims through

- Universal, whole school approaches
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long term difficulties

Lead members of staff

All staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health and wellbeing of pupils. Some staff have specific responsibilities within school:

- Sarah Tyrell - Inclusion Lead, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator and Head of School
- Katie Bickerton-White - Family Welfare and Safeguarding Lead
- Annie Goddard - Learning Mentor
- Abbie Cadden - Inclusion Assistant

Within this team, there are regular opportunities for training specific to their roles including (but not limited to): Senior Mental Health Lead, Mental Health First Aider, Attachment and trauma.

Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum. Our scheme of work (Jigsaw) is approved by the PSHE Association. Children are also taught about emotions and wellbeing through a range of other lessons such as character investigations in English, learning about health in Science and online safety lessons in computing.

Teachers also respond to emerging issues through additional lessons relevant to the needs of particular classes. 'Teachable moments' are utilised to reinforce emotional literacy and understanding through adult and pupil interactions. Teachers are vigilant and look out for patterns of behaviours to distinguish between one off events and deeper issues. Teachers use this along with knowledge of the child and their needs in order to provide the right support at the right time.

Universal Provision

All children at Leigh have access to a range of approaches to support their mental health and wellbeing which may include:

Nurture space at break and lunch

Boomerang group sessions

Calm corners in every class

Good to talk post boxes in every class

Mental Health in Schools Team whole class workshops

Support for families

Learning about feelings and self-regulation through PSHE lessons which is reinforced across all areas of the curriculum and throughout the school day

Targeted Support

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- Drawing and Talking
- Time to talk
- Friendship skills, social skills and self-esteem groups
- Socially speaking
- Anger management
- Lego therapy
- Lap books
- Dog therapy

Support from other agencies and partners

We recognise that some children may require specialist support to meet their mental health and wellbeing needs. Other specialists that our school work with include:

- School nursing service
- Mental Health in Schools Team
- Educational Psychology Services
- Behavioural support through the local authority attendance and inclusion team
- CAMHS (Child and adolescent mental health service)
- Family Support Workers
- Mosaic Family Hub

We are also able to offer some specialist support from our school staff which may include life story work, trauma work and wishes and feelings.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support through the local community and outside agencies. This information is shared through our school website, our weekly newsletter and our school facebook page.

Identifying Needs and Warning Signs

At Leigh, we have a culture of 'noticing' and professional curiosity. School staff may 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 appropriate member of the Inclusion Team.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Possible difficulties that may indicate a Mental Health or Wellbeing need may include:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

Working with Parents

In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and wellbeing through our website, facebook page and weekly newsletters

- Share opportunities for parents to access sources of further support
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to contact if they have concerns about their child
- Make our mental health and wellbeing policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children
- Signpost parents to support for their own mental health and wellbeing
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics and strategies their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for exploring this at home.

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 students safe. The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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.

Associated Policies

PSHE Policy

SEND policy

Behaviour and relationships policy

Child Protection and Safeguarding policy

SEMH offer

Staff wellbeing policy

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

Reviewed Sept 2024 - lead members of staff updated: S.Tyrell