

Pupil Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy



Last reviewed: November 2023
Approved by: Diane Anderson
Next review due: ongoing to October 2025

Rationale

At FreshSteps we recognise that positive mental health and wellbeing are essential to the development of thriving and successful pupils. It is therefore vital to our aims as an organisation that we provide high quality mental health and wellbeing support.

This policy sets out our commitment to monitoring and improving the wellbeing of our pupils. It sets out some of the ways in which key members of staff take responsibility for the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. It also describes our process for identifying and responding to mental ill health, and the support we make available to all pupils.

This policy is drafted by the deputy head teacher in consultation with the headteacher, senior leadership team (SLT), the designated safeguarding lead, the student manager and reviewed by the governing body annually.

1. Aims

We aim to ensure that our school:

- reduces the stigma attached to mental health issues and promotes positive wellbeing in all pupils
- provides a secure environment that encourages openness and trust
- can respond effectively to concerns about pupils' mental health
- embeds the skills pupils need to make good decisions about their own mental health and wellbeing
- offers comprehensive pastoral and medical support that is accessible to all pupils.

2. Roles and responsibilities

The school's designated lead for mental health and wellbeing is responsible for:

- coordinating the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing
- providing all members of staff with the knowledge and skills they need to identify signs of mental ill health in pupils
- building strong working relationships with child and adolescent mental health services and other external partners
- reporting to the governing body on the school's wellbeing policy and programmes
- working with SLT, governing body, school staff, parents and pupils to create an environment where everyone feel safe, supported and motivated.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- reviewing this policy on a regular basis, ensuring that it is developed in consultation with pupils, parents and members of staff
- ensuring that staff are equipped with the appropriate training to support pupils in mental health and wellbeing
- listening to the views of pupils and making sure that they have opportunities to contribute to the decision-making process
- ensuring that the school shares information on mental health with all pupils.

The headteacher implements these responsibilities with the support of appropriate members of the senior leadership team such as the deputy headteacher, senior leaders and pastoral staff.

The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for:

- keeping detailed records of any significant mental health concerns.
- liaising with external services where there are any significant mental health concerns.
- acting as a source of support and expertise to the school community.

All members of school staff are responsible for:

- treating all pupils with empathy, respect and kindness
- encouraging pupils to disclose concerns or seek help when necessary
- reporting any wellbeing or mental health concerns to the school's designated lead for mental health and wellbeing.

Examples of good practice at FreshSteps include:

- organising whole-school or year group assemblies to discuss specific mental health and wellbeing issues
- arranging for external speakers to visit and discuss topical issues such as the use of social media or the impact of body image
- using key dates such as Mental Health Awareness Week and World Mental Health Day as opportunities to raise the profile of mental health
- holding designated health and wellbeing days, organising activities across the curriculum
- dedicating time to celebrate pupils' academic and extracurricular achievements
- including pupil wellbeing in lesson observation criteria for teaching staff
- using displays and bulletins to signpost pupils to sources of support issues in small groups.

3. Mental health and wellbeing in the curriculum

FreshSteps is committed to promoting physical health and mental wellbeing through in-classroom teaching. In addition to the basic steps pupils can take to care for themselves, teachers will put specific emphasis on the skills young people need to overcome setbacks and succeed in the face of adversity.

The school's PSHE curriculum will include lessons on mental health and wellbeing, as well as the importance of relationships. To emphasise the benefits of spending time outdoors, pupils will engage in regular off-site activities.

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Early intervention to identify issues and provide effective support is crucial. The school's role in supporting and promoting mental health and wellbeing can be summarised as:

- **Prevention:** creating a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely, improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school population, and equipping pupils and students to be resilient so that they can manage the normal stress of life effectively. This will include teaching pupils and students about mental wellbeing through the curriculum and reinforcing this teaching through school activities and ethos.
- **Identification:** recognising emerging issues as early and accurately as possible.
- **Early support:** helping pupils and students to access evidence informed early support and interventions.
- **Access to specialist support:** working effectively with external agencies to provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment.

4. Supporting individual pupils

All members of staff will work together to identify and monitor mental health concerns. Open communication between members of staff will help to create a ‘first line’ in supporting individual pupils and responding to disclosures. Staff will record information accurately and regularly in order to track concerns. This will complement the school’s pastoral tracking processes. In addition, senior and pastoral leaders will meet frequently to discuss any ongoing concerns and make suitable arrangements as required.

Staff will be encouraged to look out for:

- erratic, unaccountable behaviour (e.g. leaving lessons suddenly)
- changes in sleeping habits
- disengagement from work or extracurricular activities
- unexpected or disproportionate reactions to ordinary situations
- aggressive or compulsive behaviour
- a drop in academic behaviour
- a drop in attendance
- isolation from peers
- dysfunctionality in family life
- talking about self-harm or suicide
- changes in appetite
- changes in clothing
- abusing alcohol or drugs

FreshSteps will provide a list of all members of staff who are available to discuss mental health concerns confidentially. If a member of staff feels it is appropriate to pass on concerns, they will explain to the pupil who they are going to talk to and what they are going to tell them.

5. Providing a network of support

In addition to supporting individual pupils with mental health and wellbeing concerns, the school will commit to making sure that all pupils can access a cohesive network of pastoral and medical services. These include:

- our pastoral team, who are available at any time of day
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- appointments with an external counsellor commissioned by the school
- The school listener, a designated member of staff who will listen to any personal issues or concerns pupils might have.
- prefects and ambassadors, who are trained to support pupils in their groups.

FreshSteps also works closely with Social Care, educational psychologists, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and local police, who are available to pupils during or outside of the school day. The headteacher and designated mental health lead will work closely together to identify opportunities for staff training, so that all members of staff feel confident in supporting pupils. Examples of good practice at FreshSteps include organising online mental health for all staff and training on how to identify the signs of anxiety and stress.

6. Working with families and the community

At FreshSteps we believe that effective mental health and wellbeing support depends on the input of parents, carers and the broader community. Through our parent coffee mornings (Friends of FreshSteps) parent information meetings, open evenings and parent surveys, we make sure that parents have regular opportunities to inform our approach.

Senior and pastoral leaders are always available to meet parents to discuss any concerns.

7. Related policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with policies for:

- anti-bullying
- child protection and safeguarding
- online safety
- Behaviour
- Rewards
- personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education.

8. Useful links

- [Young Minds](#) is one of the UK's leading charities for children and young people's mental health.
- [Place2Be](#) is one of the UK's leading children's mental health charities.
- [Mind](#) is the UK's leading mental health charity, offering a great deal of useful information on children's mental health.
- [Children's Mental Health Week](#) is an annual opportunity to encourage children, young people and adults to celebrate their uniqueness.
- [Child and adolescent mental health services \(CAMHS\)](#) provide support to children and young people with a wide range of behavioural and emotional issue

