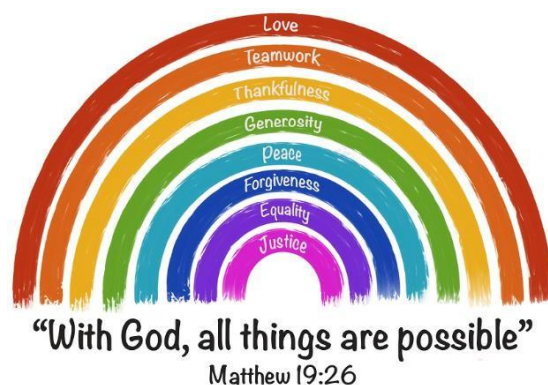


Westleigh Methodist Primary School Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy



Written by:	Mrs Hilton Fahey and Mrs Boardman
Date Agreed:	January 2026
Next Review Date:	Autumn 2028

Our Vision:



We are a loving, inclusive family, rooted in our Christian Values and nurturing ethos. We provide a positive learning environment where all children can achieve their full potential.

Our Mission:

Westleigh Methodist is a family in which everything we do is built upon our Christian values and ethos.

We endeavour to create a place where everyone feels happy, nurtured, safe and valued. We will foster a sense of high-self-esteem, love of learning and enquiring minds. We aim to equip pupils to become good citizens with high aspirations and an understanding of the part they play in our society. Our creative and exciting curriculum will lead to achievement for all and children reaching their full potential and becoming life-long learners.

Safeguarding Statement:

At the Westleigh Methodist Primary School we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

We work to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in the Safeguarding Policy apply to all staff, volunteers and governors.

School Policy Statement

As the World Health Organisation explain, mental health, *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.* It is our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in.

At Westleigh Methodist Primary School we are a loving, inclusive family, rooted in our Christian Values and nurturing ethos. We provide a positive learning environment where all children can achieve their full potential.

Everyone needs good physical and mental health and well-being and strategies to support this long term throughout their lives.

We aim to promote positive mental health for all pupils and every member of our staff. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at identified pupils. Our Mental Health Pledge is shown on the school website and appendix 1 of this policy.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

Scope

This document 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.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust policy 'Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions' in cases where a pupil's mental health and wellbeing overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the school's 'Special Educational Needs Policy' where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils'
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues;
- 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:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mrs Anna Ganley
- Deputy DSLs - Mrs C Coleman and Mrs A Hilton-Fahey
- Safeguarding Officer – Sam Sumner (Pastoral Manager)
- Inclusion Manager – Mrs A Hilton-Fahey
- Looked After and Previously Looked After Children lead – Mrs Anna Ganley
- PSHE Leader – Mrs C Coleman
- Safeguarding Governor – Mrs E Brighton

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to a Designated Safeguarding Leader 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 in line with the Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

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 an outside agency is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Pastoral team or Inclusion Manager, as appropriate.

Teaching About Mental Health & 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 school's developmental PSHE curriculum and Trust RSE Policy alongside our global well-being approaches listed later in the document.

At Westleigh Methodist Primary, we work together consistently to instil behaviours and attitudes into our children that promote positive mental health. Our children:

- have opportunities to develop their resilience and perseverance in a culture where they feel safe to explore new ideas and step outside their comfort zone
- have opportunities to participate in activities that encourage belonging
- have opportunities to participate in decision-making
- have opportunities to celebrate academic and non-academic achievements
- have their unique talents and abilities identified and developed
- have opportunities to develop self-confidence and a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- have opportunities to reflect including daily access to each class' reflection area and access to the Wellbeing room.

- have access to appropriate support that meets their needs
- have a right to be in an environment that is safe, clean, attractive and well cared for
- are surrounded by approachable adults who model positive and appropriate behaviours, interactions and ways of relating at all times

At Westleigh Methodist Primary, we work together consistently to create a mentally healthy environment where all staff:

- work collaboratively as a strong team
- celebrate and recognise success across the school
- have a range of strategies that support their mental health, e.g. wellbeing board, staff 'shout outs', signposting and a staff wellbeing day
- have recognition of their work-life balance and have the mental health and well-being of the whole staff reviewed regularly
- feel equally valued and have opportunities to contribute to decision making processes
- are provided with opportunities for CPD both personally and professionally
- have their unique talents and skills recognised and opportunities are provided for development
- have time to reflect and be evaluative

At Westleigh Methodist Primary, our mentally healthy environment is a place where parents/carers:

- can be positive role models who show respect and compassion
- support mental health in their children positively and proactively, encouraging resilience and a growth mind-set
- value regular talk with their children at an emotionally appropriate level
- guide their children consistently as a parent within clear boundaries
- are provided with opportunities where they can ask for help when needed, and use these to be open about issues they may have
- positively support the work of the school, recognising the efforts that staff go to in meeting the needs of their children
- are clear about their roles and expectations of their responsibilities in working in partnership with school
- are signposted to appropriate agencies for support e.g. through the school's pastoral team

At Westleigh Methodist Primary, a mentally healthy environment is valued because the whole school community:

- is involved in promoting positive mental health
- is valued for the role it plays in promoting positive mental health
- contributes towards the ethos of the school

Universal School Offer

As a school, we support children in understanding the importance of mental health from an early stage and actively promote how we can look after our mental health so that every child learns strategies if they should ever need them.

Mental health is how you feel about yourself emotionally, psychologically and socially. Everyone has mental health – some people have good mental health, some people don't, and a person's mental health can always change dependent on circumstances at any point. Mental health is just as important as your physical health, and just like your body, your mental health can be harmed by many different things, including:

- Abuse or neglect
- Experiencing trauma through crime or violence
- Social isolation
- Being bullied or discriminated against
- Feeling stressed or under pressure
- Living in poverty
- Having debts
- Losing someone close to you
- Having a physical health condition
- Having to care for a relative
- Substance misuse

When you're talking or reading about mental health, you may also come across the terms well-being and resilience. Your well-being is related to your mental health in that it describes how comfortable, healthy or happy you are. Your resilience (sometimes known as your emotional resilience) is your ability to react to and recover from the challenges you face. Just like your mental health, your resilience isn't fixed, and you can take steps to improving it by looking after your physical health, finding a support network of people you can trust, or making changes to your lifestyle.

At Westleigh Methodist Primary School, our work to promote positive mental health, well-being and resilience for all children includes:

- Daily access to **the outdoor reflection area.**
- A daily '**emotional check in**' system to ensure the emotional needs of all children are met. It is an open way to discuss different emotions and how we can deal with them.
- Access to the '**Wellbeing Room.**' This is a designated space with the sole intent of being a safe space for a child to go to when they feel their emotions are running too high and they need to regain their emotional and physical control. A range of activities and resources are accessible in order to help a child self- regulate.
- '**Reflection Areas**' - these are available in every classroom for all children to access. These are quiet spaces where children can pray, reflect, read,

complete work or just have some time out.

- **‘What I want my teacher to know’ box** is available in every classroom. This enables children to write down anything they wish to share with a trusted adult. This may be a worry or something they want to celebrate. Boxes are checked daily and any concerns are followed up in a timely way.
- Access to a **‘visual timetable.’** This shows children what learning is taking place across the day in a visual way. The use of this also helps children who need to have clear structure and expectations.
- **‘Buddy Benches’** are available on the playground. These are benches which children can sit on if they ever need some time out; feel sad, upset, worried or want someone to play with. By sitting on this bench, it shows an adult, play leader and other children that they may be in need of a friend or a 'buddy'.
- Access to **‘wellbeing and pastoral support’** when needed. E.g. friendship circles or time to talk.
- Access to a trained **‘school counsellor’** for children identified as requiring higher level emotional support and advice.
- **‘Growth Mindset approaches’** – As a school, we aim for all children to be resilient learners. We teach and promote Growth Mindset based on the work of Professor Carol Dweck. This is to encourage the children as learners to be open to new experiences and not to be afraid to try and fail. We want children to embrace challenge and see effort as the path to success. As a school, we believe successful individuals love learning, value effort and persist in the face of obstacles. We want our children to develop a growth mindset and believe that anything is possible with the right attitude to learning. We believe passionately that every child can succeed and flourish and achieve their potential.
- Access to specialist **Workshops** – External partners are invited to school to support the teaching of Mental Health and Wellbeing and being safe. Examples include Wigan Healthy Relationships Team, Mental Health Charities such as Healthy Mind UK, Coram SCARF, Online Safety Workshops and Wigan Healthy Lifestyles Team.
- Advice and support for those with connections to the LGBTQ+ community through raising awareness and a comprehensive PSHE/RSE curriculum.

Individual Care Plans

Sometimes, children will require additional support for a short period of time linked to a specific incident or trauma and in this instance, it is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern so that the appropriate additional support can be

put in place. It would also be vital for someone who receives a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health to have an individual support plan. This will take the format of an Early Help, 'All About Me' profile and/or an Assess, Plan, Do, Review support plan. This should be created by the pupil, school staff, the parents/carers. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's needs;
- Special requirements and precautions;
- Medication and any side effects;
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency;
- The role the school can play.

External, relevant professionals may be contacted for additional advice.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. It will be clear what support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it. The Trust, Pastoral team and Senior Leadership Team will provide or seek this information.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and toilets 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 help-seeking 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

Warning Signs

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 Mrs Anna Ganley, Designated Safeguarding Lead or Sam Sumner, Pastoral Manager.

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;
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism.

Managing Disclosures

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-judgmental.

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 using the CPOMS system. This written record should include:

- Date;
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made;
- Main points from the conversation;
- Agreed next steps.

This information should be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy DSL, who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps. It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the DSL, 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/carers should be informed if there are concerns about their child's mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents/carers themselves. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents/carers for them or with them.

Working with Parents/Carers

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents/carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents/carers we should 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/carers, the pupil, other members of staff.
- 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. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent/carer time to reflect. We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets 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/carers helplines and forums. We should always provide clear means of contacting us 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. Finish each meeting with an agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record on CPOMs. 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 get 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 communication systems.
- Keep parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

Supporting Peers

When a pupil 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. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil who is suffering and their parents/carers 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;

- Things friends should avoid doing/saying which may inadvertently cause upset;
- Warning signs that their friend needs 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.

Policy Review

This policy was adopted by the Local Advisory Board in January 2023 and will be reviewed in line with the policy review schedule in January 2028.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate if any key changes are required.

Our Mental Health Pledge

As a School we will:

- Champion whole school approaches to sustainably build a mentally healthy school community.
- Emphasise the importance of staff wellbeing as a prerequisite for the wellbeing of the children they teach and support
- Highlight the connections between nutrition, physical, emotional and mental health
- Train our staff in mental health awareness so they can better support children in our school
- Engage parents in conversations about children's mental health to foster support at home
- Seek and share good practice from other schools
- Work with organisations to promote children and young people's mental wellbeing through physical activity and active lifestyle choices
- Promote in-school support for children with mild and moderate mental health needs
- Regularly review staff workload and working hours, ensuring routine working practices are emotionally friendly and compatible with family life
- Train our staff in mental health awareness and support honest conversations about mental health in our workplace community
- Have clear signposting to further help and resources for those who may need it