Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Last reviewed	February 2024	Next review	January 2027
Review period	Annually	Reviewed by	LGB
Headteacher Signature: Anthony Flack	*Anthony Flack*	**Chair of Governors Signature:** Helen Quenet	*H*

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis.

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Introduction

At Townsend, our vision 'Achievement For All, Respect For All' is underpinned by the concept of 'Love your neighbour' from the story of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25-37. We value everyone, and show love and respect for ourselves and others, setting high standards and supporting each other so that we can all flourish. The concept of 'love your neighbour' is taught in three strands:

1. Love your neighbour – treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself
2. Love yourself – self-care is important, look after yourself physically, mentally and spiritually
3. Love the journey – whether academic or personal, Townsend supports everyone's journeys to enable you to flourish individually and collectively

Definition of Mental Health (WHO)

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 Organization)

Policy Statement

The following is taken from our Statement of Pastoral Intent

Moral Purpose

Townsend Church of England School is passionate about making a difference to the lives of young people. We know that childhood development is best approached holistically necessitating working collaboratively, as a whole staff body, with external agencies, with the wider community and most importantly with the young people in our school. We act with determination. We act proactively to support and encourage our pupils, to improve their life chances. Our school's ethos of 'Respect for All, Achievement for All' is underpinned by the concept of 'Love they Neighbour' from the bible story of the Good Samaritan (Luke10:25-37). We value everyone and believe in showing love for others and ourselves. Finally, we are committed to making a difference; we are not passive players in young people's lives but active participants who can, and do, make a real difference. These are a reflection of the school's curriculum intent statement and core values, in particular 'Respect', 'Achieve', 'Inspire', 'Support', 'Encourage' (R.A.I.S.E)

In addition to this, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff, governors and pupil body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils at the time of need.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing inclusive, 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 other school policies that may be impacted by mental health and wellbeing:

- Medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental health and wellbeing overlaps with, or is linked to, a medical issue.
- SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

- Attendance policy where mental health and wellbeing may be affecting a child's attendance to school.
- Behaviour policy where adjustments may need to be made for children where mental health and wellbeing are affecting their daily school routines.
- The anti-bullying policy focusing on the detrimental impact of bullying working in conjunction with the school's anti-bullying policies and procedures.

The policy aims to:
- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and wellbeing issues so that they understand to whom they should pass on concerns
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and know where to signpost them and their parent/carers for specific support
- Develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques
- Be cognisant and recognise the importance of staff wellbeing, instilling a culture where staff support each other and know where to access support

Lead Members of Staff

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

Headteacher – Anthony Flack – Headteacher

Designated Safeguarding Lead – Lisa Gibbons

Senior Mental Health Lead – Lisa Gibbons

School Wellbeing Lead and Mental Health First Aider/Responder – Kate Scott

Lead First Aider – Matthew Armitage

Head of PSHE/RSE and LFL – Kate Brooks

Attendance Lead – Lisa Gibbons

Designated Teacher for CLA/ PLA pupils – Lisa Gibbons

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads – Kate Brooks, Gill Llewellyn, Rob Potter, Mike Tominey, Kate Scott, Anna Phillpott, Matt Armitage

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to either the Senior Mental Health Lead or the School Wellbeing Lead 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 with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or one of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding leads or the Headteacher. 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.

Teaching about Mental Health and 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 PSHE and RSE curriculum. Work that is completed as part of the schools Anti-Bullying work, Personal Development work and enrichment afternoons also aims to teach pupils about mental health and wellbeing. Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote student wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of a student's own emotions as well as those of other people.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others. We will also use external speakers where appropriate to support the teaching of this topic.

Relevant documentation in support of the above can be requested by emailing admin@townsend.herts.sch.uk or speaking to your child's Director of Learning.

Signposting

We will display relevant sources of support within the school, communal areas, toilets, noticeboards, social media and normal channels of communication including parent mail and the website.

Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of a pupil help-seeking by ensuring pupils understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it

Sources of support at school and in the local community

School Based
- A trusted adult
- Form tutors/Director of learning
- Peer mentor
- Staff mentor
- Wellbeing lead
- Resilience mentor (VISTA, external provider)
- Male and Female mentors (VISTA, external provider)
- Lifestyle mentor (LINKS, external provider)

Local or external support may include:

- Childline
- The Sandbox
- Youth Talk
- Finch App
- CAMHS
- Young Carers

- Safe Space
- Ollie Foundation
- Herts Young Homeless
- No More Services
- NESSIE
- Sandbox

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs that 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 a member of the wellbeing or safeguarding teams via CPOMS or in a timely way if risk significant harm.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- 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
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
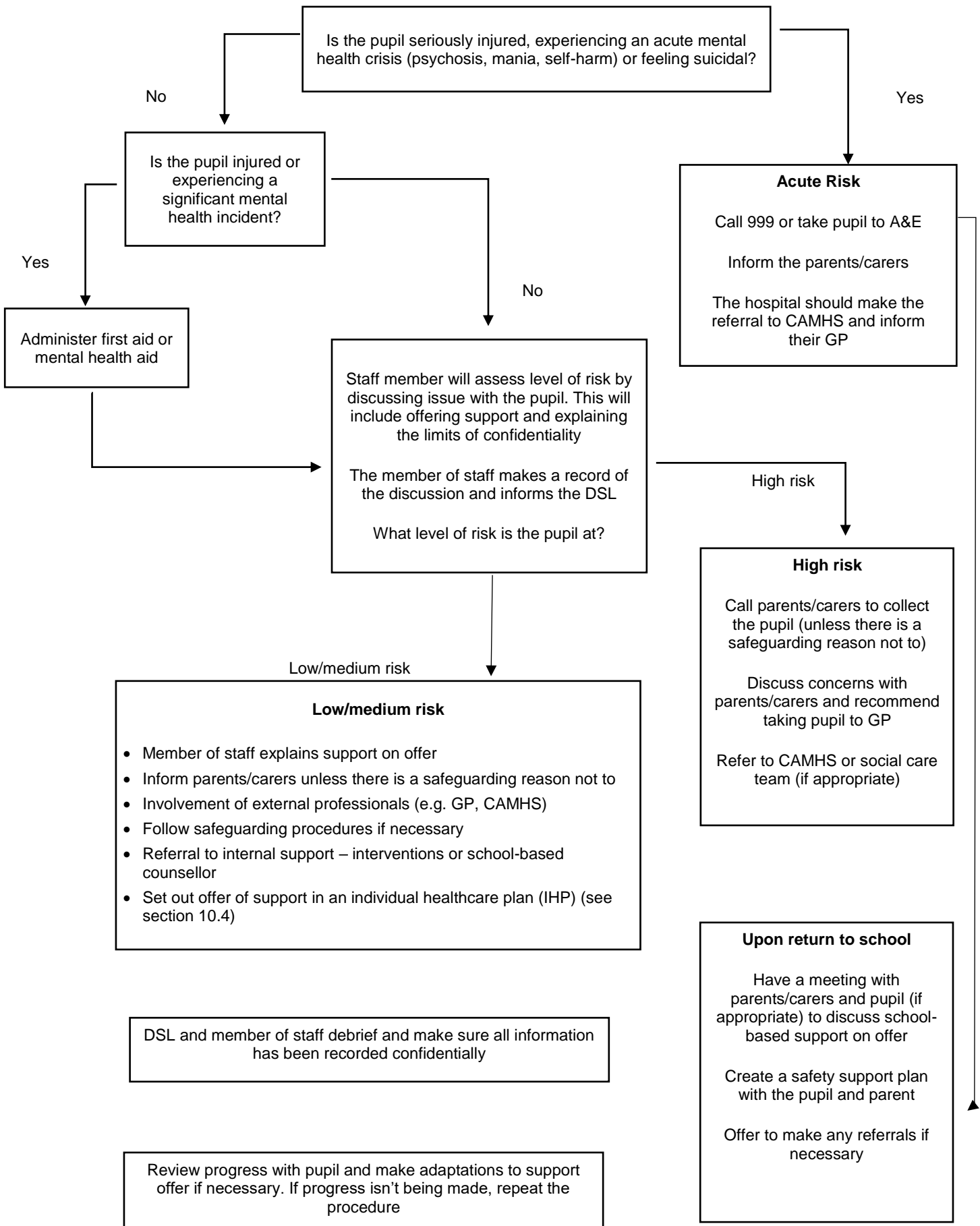
Targeted Support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parent/carers/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We work closely with external agencies and their teams in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of school-aged children and are equipped to work at community, family and individual levels. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating.

We ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems;
- Working closely with Children's Services, CAMHS and other agencies/services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral
- Identifying children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parent/carers/carers.
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective, according to the child's needs;
- Ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services when needed and available
- Provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered takes account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality
- Provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it;
- The identification, assessment, and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014.

Acute mental health crisis procedure

Is the pupil seriously injured, experiencing an acute mental health crisis (psychosis, mania, self-harm) or feeling suicidal?

No → **Is the pupil injured or experiencing a significant mental health incident?**

Yes →

Administer first aid or mental health aid

No →

Staff member will assess level of risk by discussing issue with the pupil. This will include offering support and explaining the limits of confidentiality

The member of staff makes a record of the discussion and informs the DSL

What level of risk is the pupil at?

Yes →

Acute Risk

Call 999 or take pupil to A&E

Inform the parents/carers

The hospital should make the referral to CAMHS and inform their GP

High risk →

High risk

Call parents/carers to collect the pupil (unless there is a safeguarding reason not to)

Discuss concerns with parents/carers and recommend taking pupil to GP

Refer to CAMHS or social care team (if appropriate)

Low/medium risk →

Low/medium risk

- Member of staff explains support on offer
- Inform parents/carers unless there is a safeguarding reason not to
- Involvement of external professionals (e.g. GP, CAMHS)
- Follow safeguarding procedures if necessary
- Referral to internal support – interventions or school-based counsellor
- Set out offer of support in an individual healthcare plan (IHP) (see section 10.4)

DSL and member of staff debrief and make sure all information has been recorded confidentially

Upon return to school

Have a meeting with parents/carers and pupil (if appropriate) to discuss school-based support on offer

Create a safety support plan with the pupil and parent

Offer to make any referrals if necessary

Review progress with pupil and make adaptations to support offer if necessary. If progress isn't being made, repeat the procedure

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-judgemental.

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 on CPOMS. 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

A member of the wellbeing team and/or a member of the safeguarding team will decide next steps and actions and share as appropriate. Our peer mentors will be provided with support as to how to pass on concerns.

Confidentiality

We will be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality to pupils and students. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on then we will discuss with the pupil:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

Ideally, we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent. Particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm.

All members of staff who frequently are the recipients of disclosures will have access to a support network which includes external supervision, meetings with a line manager and being in a team who share information.

Parent/carers should be informed if there are concerns about their mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parent/carers themselves. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parent/carers for them or with them but judgement must be exercised about the timely need for sharing of information.

Where a staff member suspects safeguarding or child protection concerns the Child Protection policy should be followed.

Working with Parent/carers

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parent/carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parent/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 parent/carers, the pupil, and other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parent/carers to learn of their child's mental health and wellbeing difficulties 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 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 parent/carers can also be helpful too e.g. parent 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 parent/carers often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

Working with All Parent/carers

Parent/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 parent/carers we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website and on our social media outlets
- Ensure that all parent/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 parent/carers
- Share ideas about how parent/carers can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings, parent mail notices and social media posts
- Keep parent/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 in either one-to-one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil who is suffering and their parent/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 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

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.

We will promote relevant information on our weekly staff bulletin for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The Safeguarding Network and the National College websites provide online training courses 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 developing situations with one or more pupils.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD can be discussed through the line management system.