



Policy: Mental Health and Well-Being

Policy reference no: 46

Date: September 2025

Person responsible for policy: Stephen Dean, Chief Executive Officer

Authorised by: Board of Trustees

Review date: December 2027

This Policy applies to all schools within the Primary QuEST Multi-Academy Trust. Primary QuEST is a Church of England Trust which seeks to ensure all pupils flourish, together in a supportive and caring environment.

Flourishing together through LIFE

The definition of Mental Health and Well-being

“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 Organisation)

In order for the Primary QuEST family to have positive mental health and well-being, we want all pupils and staff to:

- Feel confident in all that they do
- Enjoy every day that they come to school
- Be able to express emotional appropriately
- Make and maintain positive relationships with others
- Know how to manage stresses and deal appropriately with change

The importance of Mental Health and Well-being

At Primary QuEST, we aim to promote positive mental health and well-being for our whole school communities (children, staff, parents and carers). We also recognise how important mental health and well-being is in our lives, and that it is equally as important as physical health.

Our trust vision is focused on three areas:

- Flourishing
- Together
- Through LIFE

We use this vision to positively promote good mental health and well-being for all in our community.

As a Church of England trust, we are committed to nurturing the whole child, guided by our Christian values that emphasize love, compassion, and community. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote and create a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment for all members of our school community. We want to ensure we help the children deal with their own mental health, support others who may be suffering from poor mental health, and understand what they do in order to have a positive mind-set.

Our role is to ensure that children are equipped to handle periods of change and stress, and that they receive the support they need to reach their full potential or access help when necessary. We are also committed to educating children about maintaining positive mental health, understanding the factors that influence it, reducing the stigma associated with mental health issues, and knowing where to seek help and support.

Our aim is to foster protective factors that build resilience against mental health challenges, creating a caring school environment where:

- Every child is valued and respected.
- Children feel a strong sense of belonging and safety.
- Children are encouraged to speak openly with trusted adults about their concerns without fear of stigma.
- Positive mental health is actively promoted and appreciated.
- Bullying is not tolerated in any form.

We also recognize the crucial importance of promoting the mental health and well-being of our staff.

The purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to outline our trust's approach to promoting mental health and well-being, and to provide a framework for identifying, supporting, and referring children with mental health needs. It also sets out our commitment to staff well-being and the roles and responsibilities of all members of our trust community in fostering a mentally healthy environment. The Department for Education (DfE) acknowledges that good mental health is essential for a child's success in education, personal development, and social life. It is also crucial in building resilience and the capacity to face challenges.

How will this link to other policies?

This policy also links to our other policies on Safeguarding, Anti-bullying and SEND. It is also important to link with the Behaviour Handbooks at each school, as behaviour whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need.

A whole trust approach to promoting positive mental health

We believe that a positive trust culture, where mental health and well-being are prioritized, benefits everyone. We ensure we promote positive mental health aims to help children become more resilient, happy and successful.

We have broken this down into seven aspects:

1. Establish an ethos, policies and behaviours that promote mental health and resilience, ensuring that they are clearly understood by everyone.
2. Encouraging children to build strong social relationships, support one another and seek help when needed.
3. Empowering children to become resilient learners
4. Teaching children social and emotional skills, along with raising awareness of mental health.
5. Identifying children with mental health needs early and planning the appropriate support, including the collaboration with specialist services.
6. Collaborate effectively with parents and carers
7. Providing support and training for staff to enhance their skills and build their own resilience

We also recognise that stigma can play a part in preventing the understanding and awareness of mental health issues. Therefore, we aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and deepens understanding of these topics.

Staff roles and responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health and to understand how to protect and identify the risk factors for mental health. Each school has a Mental Health Lead who will work together to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and well-being. As well as begin to incorporate mental health and well-being into the curriculum, through PSHE lessons, assemblies and cross-curricular activities. We will also provide the relevant advice and support to staff and organise training and updates where appropriate. The Mental Health Leads meet termly with the CEO facilitated by one of the trust SENDCOs to drive forward improvements. A well-being trustee will monitor well-being at a trust level and a local advisor in each school.

At Primary QuEST, we recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals. In some instances, some children will need more intensive support at times and there is a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to children with mental health needs and their families.

Sources of relevant support include:

- Our Central & Senior Leadership Teams
- Our Designated Safeguarding team
- Our Mental Health Lead
- School support staff employed to manage mental health needs of particular children
- School support staff employed and trained to specialise in nurture provision
- Our SENDCO who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including children whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.
- The Educational Psychology team who provides 1:1 therapy and group work to children who are referred and who trains support staff to manage mental health needs of children. Support can be offered in school or at an external venue.

Supporting children's positive mental health

At Primary QuEST we believe that each school has a key role in promoting children's positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. We aim to promote children's mental health and well-being through a range of strategies and approaches throughout the school year.

Pupil-led activities (may include):

- Creating a pupil council with children from across the school, to promote pupil voice.
- A lunchtime group to support younger children at lunchtime
- Transition programme to secondary schools, ensuring Year 6 children have someone to discuss the transition process with

Class activities (may include):

- Ensuring children are praised in class for certain duties or tasks.
- Worry monsters in class for children to anonymously share their worries or concerns
- Class 'well-being check-in' where children can identify if they need to talk
- Circle times

Whole school activities (may include):

- World Mental Health Day
- Well-being walks
- Mental Health and well-being collective worships / assemblies
- Displays and information on how to promote positive mental health

Small group activities (may include):

- Well-being sessions once a term at lunch time this could include colouring, Lego building, puzzles

Supporting staffs positive mental health

At Primary QuEST we want to ensure that staff are supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally. We recognise the work that our staff do and seek to value our staff through personal and professional support, through involvement in school decisions and with the access to professional development.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and well-being of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and well-being.

We encourage staff:

- To develop a health, motivated work environment who are able to deliver a high standard of education to all pupils.
- To help ensure that our school promotes the health and well-being of all staff members, recognising the impact work can have on employees' stress levels, mental and physical health.
- To develop and maintain a positive health and safety culture through regular communication and consultation with staff on health and safety matters
- To communicate the importance of a work-life balance to all staff, and to ensure that all policy updates are communicated regularly.
- To respond sensitively to external pressures which affect the lives of staff members
- To improve staff development, co-operation and teamwork by creating effective leaders.
- To make staff members aware of the channels which can be used to manage and deal with stress or work-related health and well-being issues.

Teaching about mental health and well-being

Through PSHE and separate lessons, we will teach the knowledge and the social and emotional skills that will help children to become more resilient and understand about mental health.

EYFS and KS1 children will learn:

- To recognise, name and describe different emotions both positive and negative.
- Learn how to manage their emotions with simple strategies
- Understand how their behaviour can impact others
- Develop empathy and an understanding of other people's feelings
- Begin to learn techniques on how to calm down
- Build self-motivation and perseverance
- Practice cooperation and problem solving skills
- Identify trusted individual to turn to when they feel worried.
- About different types of teasing and bullying, that these are wrong and unacceptable

KS2 children will learn:

- What positively and negatively affects their mental and emotional health (including the media)

- About good and not to good feelings
- To recognise and respond appropriately to a wide range of feelings in others.
- To describe the range and intensity of their feeling to others.
- How to motivate themselves.
- How to empathise and be supportive of others.
- About change, including transitions (between Key Stages and schools), loss, separation, divorce and bereavement.
- About the consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including online bullying, prejudice-based language), as well as how to respond and ask for help if they are victims of this themselves.
- About the importance of talking to someone and how to get help.

Our approach to identifying, referring and supporting children

- Provide a safe environment to enable children to express themselves and be listened to.
- Ensure the welfare and safety of children are paramount.
- Identify appropriate support for children based on their needs.
- Involve parents and carers when their child needs support.
- Involve children in the care and support they have.
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with children and keep parents and carers updated

Current interventions (may include):

- ELSA (Emotional Literacy support Assistants)
- Play Therapy
- Therabuild Lego

What is ELSA?

There will always be children and young people in schools facing life challenges that detract from their ability to engage with learning. Some will require greater support to increase their emotional literacy than others. ELSA is an initiative developed and supported by educational psychologists. It recognises that children learn better and are happier in school if their emotional needs are also addressed.

The majority of ELSA work is delivered on an individual basis, but sometimes small group work is more appropriate, especially in the areas of social and friendship skills. Sessions are fun, we use a range of activities such as: games, role-play with puppets or therapeutic activities such as mindfulness or arts and craft. ELSA sessions take place in school. We endeavour to make the children feel supported and nurtured.

ELSA's are not there to fix the children's problems, but what it will do is provide emotional support. We aim to establish a warm, respectful relationship with a pupil and to provide a reflective space where they are able to share honestly their thoughts and feelings.

How does ELSA work?

Children are often put forward for ELSA support and parents will be consulted as part of the process. With the aims of the programme in mind we then plan support sessions to facilitate the pupil in developing new skills and coping strategies that allow them to manage social and emotional demands

more effectively. These sessions are usually 30-45 minutes long, are held on a weekly basis and there are usually 6-8 sessions.

Play Therapy

Here is a link to our Play Therapist, if you would like some more details.

<https://padlet.com/precioushandsplaytherapy/b2jisiwe069il74k>

Lego Therapy

Lego therapy provides the opportunity for children in school to develop their social and communication skills. Within Lego Therapy, it promotes social interaction, turn-taking skills, sharing, collaborative problem-solving and the learning of concepts. It can also be used to target goals around social skills, language and motor skills. These sessions can be done 1:1 or within a small group.

We also seek support from other trained practitioners who come into school on a regular basis to support children with more complex emotional needs.

Thera-Build® with LEGO® is a playful, therapeutic approach for promoting emotional well-being in children, using LEGO® bricks, that was developed by Alyson Thomsen of Bricks2Learn. It focuses on working therapeutically with *all* children, and is particularly helpful for young people with internalising conditions such as anxiety or attachment disorder.

Through purposeful play with LEGO® bricks, and meaningful conversation, Thera-Build® aims to reduce stress, boost confidence and self-esteem, and support children to self-regulate, by providing individualised high-quality relational building experiences that help children to positively connect with others and communicate difficult emotions.

A Thera-Build® intervention may be most beneficial on a one-to-one basis, or with a small group of children, depending on a child's individual need.

There are many benefits to the use of brick-play, including improved:

- Language and literacy skills
- Social skills, self-expression and more effective communication
- Problem solving, decision making and memory
- Hand-eye coordination, spatial awareness and fine motor skills
- Self-regulation, resilience, understanding empathy and impulse control

If you would like more information about the Thera-Build® with LEGO® Approach, please visit the website at: <https://www.bricks2learn.com/thera-build>

Working with specialist services

In some cases a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, self-harm and eating disorders. We have access to a range of specialist services and during the support will have regular contact with the service to review the support and consider next steps.

School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the Mental Health Lead or the SENDCO following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents and carers.

Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the pupil and parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs.

Main Specialist Services

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service- CAMHS - <https://www.ghc.nhs.uk/our-teams-and-services/children-and-young-people/camhs/>

Educational Psychologist - Accessed through the Mental Health Lead or SENDCO

Young Minds

Involving parents and carers

We understand and recognise the important role parents and carers have in supporting and promoting mental health and well-being of their children, and in particular supporting children who do have mental health needs.

If we have a concern, we will:

- Contact parents and carers and meet with them.
- Discuss the interventions that we have available for the child and what we think would work best.
- Offer information to take away and signpost to places to see further information, advice and support.
- Keep parents and carers up to date and informed of decisions about the support and interventions being provided.

This policy was developed by Arianna Gilbert

(Mental Health and Well-being Lead at Redmarley C of E Primary Academy)

Biblical underpinning for our Church of England schools

In parables and in conversation Jesus encourages us to show love and compassion for everyone, no matter what they are going through. He wanted everyone's life to flourish. When asked how we might have a lasting and flourishing life, Jesus said the best way was to love God from the heart, and with our soul and mind, and then to love our neighbour as ourself. Jesus explained all of this in the famous parable of the Good Samaritan. From this parable we learn that everyone's well-being is our concern (Luke 10. 25-37).

Jesus helped all sorts of people, including those who were sick or feeling low. Instead of pushing them away or judging them, Jesus showed care, healed them, and made them feel valued.

Christians treat mental health issues as complex. Poor mental health comes from many things, such as biology, thoughts and life experiences. In trying to see the whole picture, Christians can offer support and understanding without making people feel bad.

When our mental health is troubled, we can often feel lonely. Jesus shared a paradox, *"those who feel sad are blessed, because they will find comfort."* (Matthew 5. 4-11 paraphrased). And elsewhere Jesus said *"do not let your hearts be troubled"* (John 14.1, 27,28), and he promised God's peace the Holy Spirit as our comforter. This message of comfort and hope is for everyone struggling with mental health issues, for within God's love we are not alone.

Jesus also talked about how faith and prayer can help in hard times. To pray certainly is not always easy for us to do. However, encouraging children and staff to pray gives them strength and hope when they're feeling low. It's a way to connect with a caring God who knows our pain and offers comfort and peace. Jesus once said, *"Come to me, all you who are tired and burdened, and I will give you rest."* (Matthew 11:28).

As followers of Jesus, Christians are supposed to act like him, showing love and care to everyone, including those dealing with mental health problems. We do our best to create communities, within our Primary QuEST schools, where children and staff feel safe to talk without fear, about their struggles. And, in society at large, we advocate better understanding and support of our mental health.