

**Drifffield Church of England
(VC) Infant School**



'Learn to let your light shine'

Matthew 5: 14-16

**Social, Emotional and Mental
Health (SEMH) Policy**

January 2024

Statement of intent and ethos

Driffield Church of England Infant School welcomes all God's children and their families and is a place where children of all faiths and none flourish and are inspired by the Christian character and values of our school and learn to love God, one another and themselves (Mark 12:30-31) in order that they can 'Live life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)

It is this ethos underpinned by the words from Matthew 5: 14-16 'Learn to let your light shine' that underpins the importance we place on ensuring that we support all members of our school community, adults as well as children, with their mental health and wellbeing.

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 his or her community (World Health Organisation)

Our Vision

We aim to promote a caring, supportive environment in which each child and adult is valued and respected. We have high expectations for all and aspire to achieve excellence.

Driffield CE Infant School recognises that all children and adults need the foundation of positive mental health to benefit fully from all of the opportunities available to them.

Everyone experiences life challenges that can make them vulnerable and at times they may need additional support to maintain or develop good mental health.

The mental health of children and adults in school, parents, carers and the wider whole school community will impact on all areas of development, learning and achievement and experiences.

All children have the right to be educated in an environment which supports them and promotes positive mental health for everyone. All adults have the right to work in an environment that supports and promotes good mental health for everyone.

Driffield CE Infant School is committed to raising awareness, increasing understanding and providing a place where all children and young people feel safe, secure and able to achieve and experience success and well-being.

A consistent approach means that the school environment and school ethos promote the mental health of the school community.

Healthy relationships underpin positive mental health and have a significant impact.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children and Families Act 2014
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2002
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Children Act 1989

This policy has been created with regard to the following DfE guidance:

- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and behaviour in schools'
- DfE (2016) 'Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future'
- DfE (2015) 'Special educational needs and disabilities code of practice: 0 to 25'

This policy also has due regard to the school's policies including, but not limited to, the following:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions including Administering Medication Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
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Roles and responsibilities

All school leaders are responsible for:

- **Preventing mental health and wellbeing difficulties:** By creating a safe and calm environment, where mental health problems are less likely to occur, our school leaders endeavour to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school community and instil resilience in pupils. Our preventative approach includes teaching pupils about mental wellbeing through the curriculum and reinforcing these messages in our activities and ethos.
- **Identifying mental health and wellbeing difficulties:** school leaders ensure that they equip staff with the knowledge required, to enable them to make early and accurate identification of emerging problems.

- **Providing early support for pupils experiencing mental health and wellbeing difficulties:** By raising awareness and employing efficient referral processes, the school leaders can help pupils to access evidence-based early support and interventions.
- **Accessing specialist support to assist pupils with mental health and wellbeing difficulties:** By working effectively with external agencies, the school can provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment.
- **Identifying and supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND):** As part of this duty, the school leaders consider how to use some of the SEND resources to provide support for pupils with mental health difficulties that amount to SEND.
- **Identifying where wellbeing concerns represent safeguarding concerns:** Where mental health and wellbeing concerns could be an indicator of abuse, neglect or exploitation, the school will ensure that appropriate safeguarding referrals are made in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The governing body is responsible for:

- Fully engaging pupils with SEMH difficulties and their parents when drawing up policies that affect them.
- Identifying, assessing and organising provision for all pupils with SEMH difficulties, whether or not they have an Educational Healthcare Care Plan.
- Endeavouring to secure the special educational provision called for by a pupil's SEMH difficulties.
- Designating an appropriate member of staff to be the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and coordinating provisions for pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- Taking all necessary steps to ensure that pupils with SEMH difficulties are not discriminated against, harassed or victimised.
- Ensuring arrangements are in place to support pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- Appointing an individual governor or sub-committee to oversee the school's arrangements for SEMH.
- Ensuring strategies are in place to support the SEMH and well-being of the Headteacher and staff.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that those teaching or working with pupils with SEMH difficulties are aware of their needs and have arrangements in place to meet them.
- Ensuring that teachers monitor and review pupils' academic and emotional progress during the course of the academic year.

- Ensuring that the SENCO has sufficient time and resources to carry out their functions, in a similar way to other important strategic roles within the school.
- On a termly basis, carefully reviewing the quality of teaching for pupils at risk of underachievement, as a core part of the school's performance management arrangements.
- Ensuring that staff members understand the strategies used to identify and support pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- Ensuring that procedures and policies for the day-to-day running of the school do not directly or indirectly discriminate against pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- Establishing and maintaining a culture of high expectations and including pupils with SEMH difficulties in all opportunities that are available to other pupils.
- Consulting health and social care professionals, pupils and parents to ensure the needs of pupils with SEMH difficulties are effectively supported.
- Keeping parents and relevant staff up-to-date with any changes or concerns involving pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- Ensuring staff members have a good understanding of the mental health support services that are available in their local area, both through the NHS and voluntary sector organisations.

The mental health lead, who in our school is the Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overseeing the whole-school approach to mental health, including how this is reflected in policies, the curriculum and pastoral support, how staff are supported with their own mental health, and how the school engages pupils and parents with regards to pupils' mental health and awareness.
- Collaborating with the SENCO, and governing body, as part of the Senior Leadership Team, to outline and strategically develop SEMH policies and provisions for the school.
- Coordinating with the SENCO and mental health support teams to provide a high standard of care to pupils who have SEMH difficulties.
- Advising on the deployment of the school's budget and other resources in order to effectively meet the needs of pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- Being a key point of contact with external agencies, especially the mental health support services, the LA, LA support services and mental health support teams such as Time to Listen.
- Providing professional guidance to colleagues about mental health and working closely with staff members, parents and other agencies, including SEMH charities.
- Referring pupils with SEMH difficulties to external services. This is usually through a paediatrician as our children are often deemed too young to access child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).

- Overseeing the outcomes of interventions on pupils' education and wellbeing.
- Liaising with parents of pupils with SEMH difficulties, where appropriate.
- Liaising with other schools, educational psychologists, health and social care professionals, and independent or voluntary bodies.
- Liaising with the potential future providers of education, such as the junior school teachers, to ensure that pupils and their parents are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned.
- Leading mental health training for other staff.

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Collaborating with the governing body and Headteacher as part of the senior leadership team (SLT), to determine the strategic development of SEMH policies and provisions in the school.
- Undertaking day-to-day responsibilities for the successful operation of the SEMH Policy.
- Supporting teachers in the further assessment of a pupil's particular strengths and areas for improvement, and advising on the effective implementation of support.

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of the signs of SEMH difficulties.
- Planning and reviewing support for their pupils with SEMH difficulties in collaboration with parents, the SENCO and, where appropriate, the pupils themselves.
- Setting high expectations for every pupil and aiming to teach them the full curriculum, whatever their prior attainment.
- Planning lessons to address potential areas of difficulty to ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving their full potential, and that every pupil with SEMH difficulties will be able to study the full national curriculum.
- Being responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class.
- Being aware of the needs, outcomes sought and support provided to any pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- Keeping the SENCO and Head up-to-date with any changes in behaviour, academic developments and causes of concern.

Creating a supportive whole-school culture

For children:

At Driffield CE Infant School we deliver learning and support for pupils' on SEMH through the whole curriculum by:

- Having opportunities to 'Learn to let their light shine.'
- Having opportunities to talk and be listened to (regular Circle Times and listening systems)
- Having opportunities to participate in activities that encourage belonging.
- Having opportunities to participate in decision making
- Having their unique talents and abilities identified and developed
- Having opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others.
- Having opportunities to reflect
- Having access to appropriate support that meets their needs.
- Having opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others.
- Having opportunities to reflect, both indoors and outdoors.
- Having a right to be in an environment that is safe, clean, attractive and well cared for.
- Are surrounded by adults who model positive and appropriate behaviours, interactions and ways of relating at all times.
- The school's Behaviour Policy includes measures to prevent and tackle bullying, and contains an individualised, graduated response when behaviour may be the result of mental health needs or other vulnerabilities.
- The SLT ensures that there are clear policies and processes in place to reduce stigma and make pupils feel comfortable enough to discuss mental health concerns.
- Pupils know where to go for further information and support should they wish to talk about their mental health needs or concerns over a peer's or family member's mental health or wellbeing.

For adults:

- All staff are given the correct time to carry out their duties.
- All staff have an appraisal mentor with whom they can share any concerns as well as support from SLT when they need it.
- All staff work within an environment of openness, and compassionate care.
- All staff have regular meetings with the school leadership team when they can share celebrations and discuss concerns.

- All staff have access to high quality professional development around mental health and well-being.
- Staff are given the opportunity and time to research things that are of interest and will support their career.
- All staff work within an environment of trust with individuality in planning and management of work load.
- School leaders pay high regard to work load and work-life balance.
- All staff have access to counselling services through the Local Authority

Identifying signs of SEMH difficulties

The school is committed to identifying pupils with SEMH difficulties at the earliest stage possible.

- An assessment is undertaken to establish a clear analysis of the pupil's needs
- A plan is set out to determine how the pupil will be supported
- Action is taken to provide that support
- Regular reviews are undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the provision, and changes are made as necessary

Staff members understand that persistent mental health difficulties can lead to a pupil developing SEND. If this occurs, the SENCO ensures that correct provisions are implemented to provide the best learning conditions for the pupil, such as providing ELSA (emotional literacy support) sessions.

Staff members promote resilience to help encourage positive SEMH.

Staff members understand that familial loss or separation, significant changes in a pupil's life or traumatic events are likely to cause SEMH difficulties.

Staff members understand what indicators they should be aware of that may point to SEMH difficulties, such as behavioural problems, pupils distancing themselves from other pupils or changes in attitude.

Pupils' data is reviewed on a termly basis by the SLT so that patterns of attainment, attendance or behaviour are noticed and can be acted upon if necessary.

Staff members are mindful that some groups of pupils are more vulnerable to mental health difficulties than others; these include looked after children (LAC) pupils with SEND and pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Vulnerable groups

Some pupils are particularly vulnerable to SEMH difficulties. These 'vulnerable groups' are more likely to experience a range of adverse circumstances that increase the risk of mental health problems.

Staff are aware of the increased likelihood of SEMH difficulties in pupils in vulnerable groups and remain vigilant to early signs of difficulties.

Vulnerable groups include the following:

- Pupils who have experienced abuse, neglect, exploitation or other adverse contextual circumstances
- Children in need
- LAC
- Previously LAC (PLAC)
- Socio-economically disadvantaged pupils, including those in receipt of, or previously in receipt of, free school meals and the pupil premium

These circumstances can have a far-reaching impact on behaviour and emotional states. These factors will be considered when discussing the possible exclusion of vulnerable pupils.

Children in need, LAC and previously LAC (PLAC)

Children in need, LAC and PLAC are more likely to have SEND and experience mental health difficulties than their peers.

Children in need, LAC and PLAC are more likely to struggle with executive functioning skills, forming trusting relationships, social skills, managing strong feelings, sensory processing difficulties, and coping with change.

Children in need may also be living in chaotic circumstances and be suffering, or at risk of, abuse, neglect and exploitation. They are also likely to have less support available outside of school than most pupils.

School staff are aware of how these pupils' experiences and SEND can impact on their behaviour and education.

Where a pupil is being supported by LA children's social care services (CSC), the school works with their allocated social worker to better understand the pupil's wider needs and contextual circumstances. This collaborative working informs assessment of needs and enables prompt responses to safeguarding concerns.

When the school has concerns about a previously looked-after child's behaviour, the pupil's parents/carers or the designated teacher seeks advice from the Virtual School Headteacher (VSH) to determine the best way to support the pupil.

Special Educational Needs and SEMH

The school recognises it is well-placed to identify SEND at an early stage and works with partner agencies to address these needs. The school's full SEND identification and support procedures are available in the SEND Policy.

Where pupils have certain types of SEND, there is an increased likelihood of mental health problems. For example, children with autism or learning difficulties are significantly more likely to experience anxiety.

Early intervention to address the underlying causes of disruptive behaviour includes an assessment of whether appropriate support is in place to address the pupil's SEND.

The Headteacher considers the use of a multi-agency assessment for pupils demonstrating persistently disruptive behaviour. These assessments are designed to identify unidentified SEND and mental health problems, and to discover whether there are housing or family problems that may be having an adverse effect on the pupil.

The school recognises that not all pupils with mental health difficulties have SEND.

SEMH intervention and support

- The curriculum for PSHE (Personal and social health education) focusses on promoting pupils' resilience, confidence and ability to learn.
- Positive classroom management and working in small groups is utilised to promote positive behaviour, social development and high self-esteem.
- Where appropriate, the school supports parents in the management and development of their child.
- Consult Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) about the most effective things the school can do to support pupils and when necessary make referrals to the service
- Well-established nurture groups are in place to address any emerging SEMH difficulties in pupils.
- Play-based approaches are in place to develop more positive relationships between pupils and their parents (Play and Stay).
- Specific classroom management techniques for supporting pupils are in place. These techniques may include, for example, using a token system for rewards or changing seating arrangements.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and any other relevant staff members, alongside the pupil and their parents, work together to create a safety plan outlining how the pupil is kept safe and the support available.

Working with parents

The school works with parents wherever possible to ensure that a collaborative approach is utilised which combines in-school support with at-home support.

The school ensures that pupils and parents are aware of the mental health support services available from the school and from other agencies

Parents and pupils are encouraged and supported to seek and receive support elsewhere, including from their GP, NHS services, trained professionals working in CAMHS, voluntary organisations and other sources.

Administering medication

The full arrangements in place to support pupils with medical conditions requiring medication can be found in the school's Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions including Administering Medication Policy.

School leaders will ensure that medication is included in a pupil's Individual Healthcare Plan where recommended by health professionals.

Relevant staff know what medication pupils are taking, and how it should be stored and administered.

Behaviour and exclusions

When exclusion is a possibility, the school considers contributing factors, which could include mental health difficulties.

Where there are concerns over behaviour, the school carries out an assessment to determine whether the behaviour is a result of underlying factors such as undiagnosed learning difficulties, speech and language difficulties, child protection concerns or mental health problems and the relevant support is put in place.

Monitoring and review

The policy is reviewed as a minimum every three years by the Headteacher in conjunction with the governing body – any changes made to this policy are communicated to all members of staff.

This policy is reviewed in light of any serious SEMH related incidents.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is **January 2027**

