

Vigo Primary School



Mental Health Policy

This policy has been adopted by the Governing Body in June 2025 and will be reviewed in June 2026.

Signed: *Marty Johnson* (CoG)

Policy Statement

At Vigo Primary School it is our vision that all children are entitled to develop academically, socially, emotionally and into healthy young people, enabling each child to grow in confidence and be able to fully participate in everything that goes on in the wider community with confidence. It is widely recognised that a child's emotional health and wellbeing influences their cognitive development and learning, as well as their physical and social health and their mental wellbeing in adulthood.

The department for Education recognises that, in order to help their pupils succeed: schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy.

“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 2014)

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health for every child, parent / carer and staff. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at identified vulnerable pupils and families. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue, however at Vigo Primary School it is identified that many classrooms have a higher number of children than this.

We recognise as a school that by developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for children affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health. See Appendix 1 for information and additional support about mental health illnesses.

This policy describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing and is intended as guidance for all staff and governors. It should be read in conjunction with our supporting children with medical conditions policy in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue, the SEND policy where a student has an identified special educational need and the safeguarding policy in relation to prompt action and wider concerns of vulnerability.

Ethos

Vigo Primary School aims to support and teach skills to pupils and staff to increase their awareness of emotional health and wellbeing.

Two key elements to support good mental health are:-

- Feeling Good – experiencing positive emotions like happiness, contentment and enjoyment. Including feelings like curiosity, engagement and safety.

- **Functioning Well** – how a person is able to function in the world, this includes positive relationships and social connections, as well as feeling in control of your life and having a sense of purpose.

To promote first aid for mental health and wellbeing Vigo Primary School aims to:

- To develop a whole school approach for both pupils and staff.
- To create an approach on the school responsibilities taken from the Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (2018) and the 8 key principles identified in '**Promoting Children and Young people Emotional Health and Wellbeing**' (2015 updated in 2023).
- To work together with families.
- To provide a holistic and multi- agency approach that is identified in the children's individual SEN support plans.

The following diagram shows our principles to promote emotional health and wellbeing

Figure 2. Eight principles to promoting a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing.



The principles will underpin the approaches used to support the development and integration of wellbeing strategies within Vigo Primary School. The policy and curriculum delivery will be tailored to promote the key aspects of improving mental health illness and wellbeing. It will focus on creating a socially, emotionally and physical rich environment where key relationships can thrive and children can feel secure in their learning.

All staff has a responsibility to promote the mental health and emotional wellbeing of pupils.

Staff with a specific, relevant responsibility includes:

Mrs Dance, Mrs Reid, Mrs Parry, Mrs Wright, Mr Dockree, Mrs Renouf, Ms Ive - Designated Safeguarding Officers

Mrs Wright – SENCO

Mrs Parry – Family Support Worker

Inclusion Leader

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child should speak to the SENCO or Inclusion Lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the child is in danger of immediate harm then the normal safeguarding procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the safeguarding lead. If the child 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 CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Mrs Wright and the Inclusion leader.

Individual SEN support plans will identify an individual support for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals and recorded in the section (Individual Health Care Plan In relation to DFE statutory guidance 2015) having links to individual behaviour plan and risk assessments.

The plan will include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- 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 in relation to staff development and implementing support linked to policy and practice.

Pupil Wellbeing Interventions

Whole school approach:

- Concept driven curriculum
- PDL teaching
- Pupil voice – communication skills (School Council, pupil passports, pupil EHCP reviews)
- Emotional literacy skills
- PDL days
- THRIVE
- Self-regulation strategies linked to behaviour management, CPD training and staff meeting updates.
- Assemblies
- P4C
- Attachment Aware Schools approaches

Targeted Support:

- Nurture group
- ELSA
- FEIPS
- Therapeutic Story writing
- Andover Mind
- Ready 2 Learn Room

Identified pupils will receive bespoke intervention packages delivered by trained staff who has undertaken relevant training in relation to the development of resilience through providing a secure basis, enhancing self – esteem and self - efficiency will underpin all interventions. Virtual School Heads in the LA will be made aware of information about all looked after children's' physical, emotional or mental health that may have an impact on his or her learning and educational progress, this will be indicated in their Personal Education Plan (PEP).

Staff Identification

It is recognised at Vigo Primary School that promoting staff health and emotional well-being should be an integral part of the whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. Therefore training

and signposting to materials about mental health and emotional wellbeing will be made available for all staff. An open door policy to senior leadership is always made available if staff is in need of speaking to someone about any issues of concern and a fully committed supportive governing body.

All staff will be made aware of the Hampshire Resilience website

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schools-resilience/resilience-staff-tools> and the Health Assured Employee Support line details will be displayed and given to staff when they are struggling. Supervision and appraisal will allow for mutual communication about personal health and emotional wellbeing if both felt it is deemed necessary.

Staff Wellbeing Support and Interventions

Whole School Approach

- SLT open door policy and contactable governing body.
- Posters/ leaflets
- Signposting to additional CPD courses Work life Support and Flexibility for personal wellbeing appointments within school time.
- Library of resources and online training with Hampshire Resilience tool
- LA Confidential Counselling Service Emotional Wellbeing information

Targeted support

- Debriefing/support sessions for all staff working in classes for pupils with complex medical needs or challenging behaviour from a member of SLT.
- Significant incidents – debriefing/counselling with a trained professional for all staff involved in a significant incident if needed via Hampshire Health Assured Employee Support.

Procedure for Concern in relation to mental health issues.

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 in writing 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

This information should be shared with the SENCO or Inclusion Leader who advise about next steps.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality, we can never promise to keep a secret.

If we think it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on then we should discuss with the child:

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

Working with all Parents and Carers

Parents 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 we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who they can talk to, and how to get the support they need if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child.
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents.
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular parent's workshops.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in school and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

Staff Training and CPD

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep students safe. We will email links across the year for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The MindEd www.minded.org.uk and Mentally Healthy School <https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/> websites provide free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue and resources for staff to use in lessons. 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 to 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 should be discussed with the Head Teacher or SENCO, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Appendix 1: Further information and sources of support about common mental health issues

Prevalence of Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Issues

- 1 in 10 children and young people aged 5 - 16 suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder - that is around three children in every class.
- Between 1 in every 12 and 1 in 15 children and young people deliberately self-harm.
- There has been a big increase in the number of young people being admitted to hospital because of self harm. Over the last ten years this figure has increased by 68%.
- More than half of all adults with mental health problems were diagnosed in childhood. Less than half were treated appropriately at the time.
- Nearly 80,000 children and young people suffer from severe depression.
- The number of young people aged 15-16 with depression nearly doubled between the 1980s and the 2000s.
- Over 8,000 children aged under 10 years old suffer from severe depression.
- 3.3% or about 290,000 children and young people have an anxiety disorder.
- 72% of children in care have behavioural or emotional problems - these are some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Below is information and guidance about the issues most commonly seen in school-aged children. The links will take you through to the most relevant page of the listed website. Some pages are aimed primarily at parents but they are listed here because we think they are useful for school staff too.

Support on all of these issues can be accessed via Young Minds (www.youngminds.org.uk), Mind (www.mind.org.uk) and (for e-learning opportunities) MindEd (www.minded.org.uk).

Self-harm

Self-harm describes any behaviour where a young person causes harm to themselves in order to cope with thoughts, feelings or experiences they are not able to manage in any other way. It most frequently takes the form of cutting, burning or non-lethal overdoses in adolescents, while younger children and young people with special needs are more likely to pick or scratch at wounds, pull out their hair or bang or bruise themselves.

Online support: SelfHarm.co.uk: www.selfharm.co.uk National Self-Harm Network: www.nshn.co.uk

Books: • Pooky Knightsmith (2015) Self-Harm and Eating Disorders in Schools: A Guide to Whole School Support and Practical Strategies. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
Keith Hawton and Karen Rodham (2006) By Their Own Young Hand: Deliberate Self-harm and Suicidal Ideas in Adolescents. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

• Carol Fitzpatrick (2012) A Short Introduction to Understanding and Supporting Children and Young People Who Self-Harm. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Depression

Ups and downs are a normal part of life for all of us, but for someone who is suffering from depression these ups and downs may be more extreme. Feelings of failure, hopelessness, numbness or sadness may invade their day-to-day life over an extended period of weeks or months, and have a significant impact on their behaviour and ability and motivation to engage in day-to-day activities.

Online support: Depression Alliance: www.depressionalliance.org/information/what-depression

Books: • Christopher Dowrick and Susan Martin (2015) Can I Tell you about Depression?: A guide for friends, family and professionals. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Anxiety, panic attacks and phobias

Anxiety can take many forms in children and young people, and it is something that each of us experiences at low levels as part of normal life. When thoughts of anxiety, fear or panic are repeatedly present over several weeks or months and/or they are beginning to impact on a young person's ability to access or enjoy day-to-day life, intervention is needed.

Online support: Anxiety UK: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Books • Lucy Willetts and Polly Waite (2014) Can I Tell you about Anxiety?: A guide for friends, family and professionals. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
• Carol Fitzpatrick (2015) A Short Introduction to Helping Young People Manage Anxiety. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Obsessions and compulsions

Obsessions describe intrusive thoughts or feelings that enter our minds which are disturbing or upsetting; compulsions are the behaviours we carry out in order to manage those thoughts or feelings. For example, a young person may be constantly worried that their house will burn down if they don't turn off all switches before leaving the house. They may respond to these thoughts by repeatedly checking switches, perhaps returning home several times to do so. Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) can take many forms – it is not just about cleaning and checking.

Online support: OCD UK: www.ocduk.org/ocd

Books • Amita Jassi and Sarah Hull (2013) Can I Tell you about OCD?: A guide for friends, family and professionals. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

- Susan Connors (2011) The Tourette Syndrome & OCD Checklist: A practical reference for parents and teachers. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Suicidal feelings

Young people may experience complicated thoughts and feelings about wanting to end their own lives. Some young people never act on these feelings though they may openly discuss and explore them, while other young people die suddenly from suicide apparently out of the blue.

Online support: Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org; On the edge: Child Line spotlight report on suicide: www.nspcc.org.uk/preventingabuse/researchand-resources/on-the-edge-childline-spotlight

Books • Keith Hawton and Karen Rodham (2006) By Their Own Young Hand: Deliberate Self-harm and Suicidal Ideas in Adolescents. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

- Terri A.Erbacher, Jonathan B. Singer and Scott Poland (2015) Suicide in Schools: A Practitioner's Guide to Multi-level Prevention, Assessment, Intervention, and Postvention. New York: Routledge

Eating problems

Food, weight and shape may be used as a way of coping with, or communicating about, difficult thoughts, feelings and behaviours that a young person experiences day to day. Some young people develop eating disorders such as anorexia (where food intake is restricted), binge eating disorder and bulimia nervosa (a cycle of bingeing and purging). Other young people, particularly those of primary or preschool age, may develop problematic behaviours around food including refusing to eat in certain situations or with certain people. This can be a way of communicating messages the child does not have the words to convey.

Online support: Beat – the eating disorders charity: www.b-eat.co.uk/about-eating-disorders; Eating Difficulties in Younger Children and when to worry: www.inourhands.com/eatingdifficultiesin-younger-children;

Books: • Bryan Lask and Lucy Watson (2014) Can I tell you about Eating Disorders? A Guide for Friends, Family and Professionals. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

- Pooky Knightsmith (2015) Self-Harm and Eating Disorders in Schools: A Guide to Whole School Support and Practical Strategies. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Pooky Knightsmith (2012) Eating Disorders Pocketbook. Teachers' Pocketbooks