



Oldbury Wells School Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy 2022

**FREQUENCY OF
REVIEW:**

Every 3 years

**RATIFICATION
DATE:**

November 2022

RATIFIED BY:

OWS Local Governing Body

**DATE OF NEXT
REVIEW:**

September 2025
(unless there is a material change)

AUTHOR:

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Policy Statement

At Oldbury Wells School, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of students, parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders.

Mental health is a state of wellbeing 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/her community. (World Health Organization)

Oldbury Wells School aims to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students.

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. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures, we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected, both directly and indirectly, by mental ill health.

Scope

This policy describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. It is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors and will:

- Provide guidance to school staff on our school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across all communities in the school
- Inform students and parents about the support that they can expect from the school in respect of supporting mental health and wellbeing

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- SEND policy
- Behaviour policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing across the whole school;
- Create a culture of wellbeing and inclusion;
- Foster a positive atmosphere in school, where students feel able to discuss and reflect on their own experiences with mental health openly;
- Celebrate all of the ways students achieve at our school, both inside and outside the classroom;
- Allow students to participate in forming our approach to mental health by promoting student voice;
- Give students the opportunity to develop their self-esteem by taking responsibility for themselves and others;
- Spread awareness of the varieties of ways mental health issues can manifest;
- Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues;
- Provide support to staff working with students with mental health issues;
- Provide support and access to resources to students experiencing mental ill health alongside their peers, their families and the staff who work with them.

Legal Basis

This policy was written with regard to:

[The Equality Act 2010](#)

[The Data Protection Act 2018](#)

Articles 3 and 23 of the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

Lead Members of Staff

All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across the school and for understanding risk factors.

Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

Rebecca Lawson	Designated Safeguarding Lead/Mental Health Lead
Sarah Barlow	Safeguarding and Welfare Officer
Tom Williams	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
April Bishell	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
Catherine Morgan	SENCO

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to Rebecca Lawson, the Mental Health Lead, in the first instance. If there is a concern that the student is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed. If the student 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 BeeU (previously CAMHS) is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Mental Health Lead.

Teaching About Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy are included as part of the PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the needs of the cohort being taught, but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

School will follow the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure mental health and emotional wellbeing issues are taught in a safe and sensitive manner, which helps rather than harms.

Students will be taught to:

- Develop healthy coping strategies
- Challenge misconceptions around mental health
- Understand their own emotional state
- Keep themselves safe

Staff will create an open culture around mental health by:

- Discussing mental health with students in order to break down stigma
- Encouraging students to disclose when they think their mental health is deteriorating

Signposting

Sources of support will be displayed around the school and linked to on the school website, so students and parents are aware of how they can get help.

The Mental Health Lead will be available to provide further information to students and parents/carers if they want to learn more about what support is available.

School will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

We will promote sources of support and will regularly highlight these to students within relevant parts of the curriculum and assemblies. Whenever staff highlight sources of support, they will increase the chance of students seeking help by ensuring they 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 student 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 Rebecca Lawson.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in mood or energy level
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Changes in attitude in lessons or academic attainment
- Changes in level of personal hygiene
- Social isolation
- Poor attendance or punctuality
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, worthlessness or feeling like a failure
- Abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Weight loss or gain
- Secretive behaviour
- Covering parts of the body that they wouldn't have previously
- Refusing to participate in P.E. or being secretive when changing clothes
- Physical pain or nausea with no obvious cause
- Physical injuries that appear to be self-inflicted
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide

Managing Disclosures

If a student makes a disclosure about themselves or a peer to a member of staff, staff should remain calm, non-judgmental and reassuring.

Staff will focus on the student's emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to find out why they are feeling that way or offering advice.

Staff will always follow the school's safeguarding policy and pass on all concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Mental health lead (Rebecca Lawson). All disclosures are recorded on CPOMS.

When making a record of a disclosure CPOMS, the following information will be included:

- The full name of the member of staff who is making the record
- The full name of the student(s) involved
- The date, time and location of the disclosure
- The context in which the disclosure was made
- Any questions asked or support offered by the member of staff

Confidentiality

Staff should not promise a student that they will keep a disclosure secret, instead they will be upfront about the limits of confidentiality.

A disclosure cannot be kept secret because:

- Being the sole person responsible for a student's mental health could have a negative impact on the member of staff's own mental health and wellbeing
- The support put in place for the student will be dependent on the member of staff being at school
- Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the student in question

Staff should always share disclosures with at least one appropriate colleague. This will usually be the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Mental Health Lead. If information needs to be shared with other members of staff or external professionals, it will be done on a need-to-know basis.

Before sharing information disclosed by a student with a third party, the member of staff will discuss it with the student and explain:

- Who they will share the information with
- What information they will share
- Why they need to share that information

Staff will attempt to receive consent from the student to share their information, but the safety of the student comes first.

Parents will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be followed.

The process for managing confidentiality around disclosures is as follows:

1. Student makes a disclosure.
2. Member of staff offers support.
3. Member of staff explains the issues around confidentiality and rationale for sharing a disclosure with Designated Safeguarding Lead.
4. Member of staff will attempt to get the student's consent to share – if no consent is given, explain to the student who you will share the information with and explain why you need to do this.
5. Member of staff will record the disclosure on CPOMS and share the information with the chosen elected member of staff.

6. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or another member of the pastoral team) will inform the parent/carer (if appropriate).
7. Any other relevant members of staff or external professionals will be informed on a need-to-know basis.

Baseline Support for all Students

As part of the school's commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all students, the school offers support to all students by:

- Raising awareness of mental health during assemblies, tutor time, PSHE and mental health awareness week.
- Signposting all students to sources of online support on the school website.
- Having open discussions about mental health during lessons.
- Providing students with avenues to provide feedback on any elements of the school that is negatively impacting their mental health.
- Monitoring of students' mental health through assessments e.g. PASS assessment.
- Appointing a Mental Health Lead with a strategic oversight of our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing.
- Offering pastoral support through Heads of Year and Student Support Workers.
- Making classrooms a safe space to discuss mental health and wellbeing.

Assessing What Further Support Is Needed

If a student is identified as having a mental health need, the Mental Health Lead will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to making an assessment and providing tailored support, further to the provision of the baseline support as detailed above. The school will offer support in cycles of:

- Assessing what the student's mental health needs are
- Creating a plan to provide support
- Taking the actions set out in the plan
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the support offered

Internal Mental Health Interventions

Where appropriate, a student will be offered support that is tailored to their needs as part of the graduated approach detailed above. The support offered at our school includes:

- Reduced timetable
- Time out cards
- Counselling

Individual Care Plans

It may be helpful to draw up an individual care plan for students causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the student, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a student'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

Making External Referrals

If a student's needs cannot be met by the internal offer the school provides, the school will make, or encourage parents to make, a referral for external support.

A student could be referred to:

- GP or paediatrician
- BeeU (CAMHS)
- Mental health charities (e.g. Samaritans, Mind, Young Minds, Kooth)

Working with Parents

We will work with parents and carers to support students' mental health by:

- Asking parents/carers to inform us of any mental health needs their child is experiencing, so we can offer the right support.
- Informing parents/carers of mental health concerns that we have about their child.
- Engaging with parents/carers to understand their mental health and wellbeing issues, as well as that of their child, and support them accordingly to make sure there is holistic support for them and their child.
- Highlighting sources of information and support about mental health and wellbeing on our school website, including the mental health and wellbeing policy.
- Liaising with parents/carers to discuss strategies that can help promote positive mental health in their child.
- Providing guidance to parents/carers on navigating and accessing relevant local mental health services or other sources of support (e.g. parent forums).
- Keeping parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their child is learning about in PSHE, and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

When informing parents about any mental health concerns we have about their child, we will endeavour to do this face to face.

These meetings can be difficult, so the school will ensure that parents are given time to reflect on what has been discussed, and that lines of communication are kept open at the end of the meeting.

A record of what was discussed, and action plans agreed upon in the meeting will be recorded and added to the student's confidential record. If appropriate, an individual care plan will be created in collaboration with parents/carers.

Supporting Peers

Watching a friend experience poor mental health can be extremely challenging for students. Students may also be at risk of learning and developing unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other.

We will offer support to all students impacted by mental health directly and indirectly. We will review the support offered on a case-by-case basis. Support might include:

- Strategies they can use to support their friends
- Things they should avoid doing/saying
- Warning signs to look out for

- Signposting to sources of external support

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their child protection training to enable them to keep students safe.

All staff will be offered training so they:

- Have a good understanding of what students' mental health needs are
- Know how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health
- Know a clear process to follow if they identify a student in need of help

Training opportunities for staff who require more indepth knowledge will be considered as part of the performance appraisal process. Additional CPD will also be supported throughout the year, where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more students.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school training should be discussed with Katy Barlow, CPD Coordinator.

Support for Staff

We recognise that supporting a student experiencing poor mental health can be distressing for staff. To combat this, we will:

- Treat mental health concerns seriously
- Offer staff supervision sessions
- Support staff experiencing poor mental health themselves
- Create a pleasant and supportive work environment

Links With Other Schools and External Agencies

Oldbury Wells School is proactive in developing links and sharing good practice with other schools in the area of mental health. Rebecca Lawson is currently part of the South Shropshire Mental Health Networking Meetings, which are attended by school Mental Health Leads and representatives from other agencies, such as Early Help, BeeU (previously CAMHS) and the Educational Psychology Service. At the meetings, a Shropshire wide approach to supporting children's mental health and opportunities for joint working are discussed.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in September 2025.