Orchard Lea Federation
Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Date agreed: July 2025
Date for renewal: July 2028

Policy Statement

At Orchard Lea Federation we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing for all pupils, families, members of staff and governors. Our *Every Child, Every Day* vision allows all voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures we aim to provide a safe and supportive environment for all.

At Orchard Lea we define Mental Health and Resilience as:

Good Mental Health

Individuals are mentally healthy when they have the ability to:

- Develop psychologically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.
- Initiate, develop and sustain mutually satisfying personal relationships.
- Use and enjoy solitude.
- Be aware of others and empathise with them.
- Experience happiness and can play and learn.
- Develop a sense of right and wrong.
- Resolve (face) problems and setbacks and learn from them.
- Develop a sense of self and identity.

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from the disappointments and difficulties we all experience. It is the ability to build protective factors in our lives which promote and protect our emotional wellbeing when faced with every knockbacks and unexpected changes.

Resilience is promoted across our federation through our learning power 'Mighty Mouse' in the infant school and through the core value of resilience in the junior school.

Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing for our community.
- Remove the stigma of mental health issues.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in pupils and each other.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support; both for themselves and pupils; who may have mental health issues.
- Provide the appropriate support to pupils with mental health issues.
- Develop resilience amongst pupils and raise awareness of resilience building techniques, creating a safe and nurturing environment for all.

- Raise awareness amongst our community of mental health issues and encourage staff to disclose any mental health issues in a supportive environment.
- Encourage a mental health friendly environment where everyone is aware of the signs and symptoms of mental ill health and can effectively sign post pupils and families.

Key staff members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, parents and each other. However, key members of staff have specific roles to play. In our federation we have the following roles:

- Senior Leadership Team
- SENDCO (Special needs co-ordinator)
- Family Support Worker
- ELSA/TALA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) and (Therapeutic Active Listening Assistant).
- Designated Safeguarding Leaders
- Safeguarding Governor

Section 1 – Health and Welfare of Pupils

Mental health in children

Some children experience a range of emotional and social difficulties that we consider are outside the normal range. These children could be described as experiencing mental health disorders or difficulties.

Mental health professionals have defined these as:

- Emotional disorders, e.g. phobias, anxiety states and depression;
- Conduct disorders, e.g. stealing, defiance, fire-setting, aggression and anti- social behaviour;
- Hyperkinetic disorders e.g. disturbance of activity and attention;
- Developmental disorders e.g. delay in acquiring certain skills such as speech, social ability or bladder control, primarily affecting children with autism and those with pervasive developmental disorders;
- Attachment disorders, e.g. children who are markedly distressed or socially impaired as a result of an extremely abnormal pattern of attachment to parents or major care givers;
- Other mental health problems including eating disorders, habit disorders, post-traumatic stress syndromes; sleep disorders; and psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia and manic depressive disorder.

Many of these problems will be experienced as mild and transitory challenges for the child and their family, whereas others will have serious and longer lasting effects. When a problem is particularly severe or persistent over time, or when a number of these difficulties are experienced at the same time, children are often described as having mental health disorders.

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil or parent, in the first instance, they will raise their concerns to the key members of staff listed above. Parents will also be contacted. If there is a concern that the pupil is a high

risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures will be followed. If the pupil presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

Care Plans

When a pupil identified as having cause for concern, the school will meet with the parents/carers and agree a way forward. We will note any outcomes/support on CPOMS.

For all pupils with care plans and identified needs reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure full access to the curriculum. These may include:

- Breaks from class when required;
- Provision of stress relief toys;
- Work broken into small chunks;
- Individual behaviour plans
- Support from the ELSA or TALA program
- A referral to the MHST team (Mental Health Support Team).

Pupils have the opportunity to raise concerns about their well-being through:

- Building good relationships with adults
- Time to talk- for example, circle time
- Systems such as worry boxes and time to talk pegs.
- PSHE lessons. (Personal , Social, Health and Economic)

Curriculum

Underpinning our curriculum, we have our 5 key learning powers/core values which support pupils to learn the skills they need to stay mentally well.

Pupils are supported with their well being and mental health through our PHSE curriculum. We use the Coram Scarf scheme across the federation to ensure that all pupils are taught in a sequential and age appropriate way.

The SCARF programme divides the year into 6 themed units:
1. Me and My Relationships: includes content on feelings, emotions, conflict resolution and friendships;
2. Valuing Difference: a focus on respectful relationships and British values;
3. Keeping Myself Safe: looking at keeping ourselves healthy and safe.
4. Rights and Responsibilities: learning about money, living the wider world and the environment;
5. Being My Best: developing skills in keeping healthy, developing a growth mindset (resilience), goal-setting and achievement;
6. Growing and Changing: finding out about the human body, the changes that take place from birth to old age and being safe.

Children are encouraged to engage in activities that promote an understanding of themselves as growing and changing individuals, and as members of a wider community, based on their own first-hand experiences. These activities also encourage pupils to understand how their choices and behaviours can affect others. They are encouraged to play and learn alongside – then collaboratively with – their peers. They may use their personal and social skills to develop or extend these activities. Children are also given the opportunity to make choices about their health and environment and are encouraged to develop a caring attitude towards others.

Pupils are also taught about appropriate online relationships and online safety through our computing curriculum.

In addition, we ensure that:

- Opportunities to experience challenges in the outdoor environment are taken.
- Pupils are encouraged to act as role models within the school environment.
- A commitment to follow a healthy lifestyle is developed through participation in varied, relevant, realistic and enjoyable activities.

- Our learning powers are taught in the infant school, and then continually promoted in the junior school.
- Pupils are encouraged to try new things and develop as individuals. For example, a residential in Y6.

Signposting
We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.

Within the school (noticeboards) and through our communication channels (newsletters, website), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure staff, parents and pupils understand:
- What help is available.
- Why they should access it.
- Who it is aimed at.
- What is likely to happen next.
- How to access it.

Warning Signs
Staff may become aware of warning signs which 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 alert a Designated Safeguarding Leader and the parents.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of include:
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- 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
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretively
- Lateness to, or absence from, school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absences

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 parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We work closely with the outside agencies such as the MHST team in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of our pupils.

We work closely with other professionals such as:

- Educational Psychologist
- Primary Behaviour Support
- Early Help Service
- Inclusion Support Service
- MHST team
- Children's Services

In addition, we offer the following provision in house:

- ELSA support
- TALA support
- Parent support.

When thresholds are met referrals may be made to:

- Children's Services
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health)
- School Nurse
- MHST team
- Early Help Hub
- Primary Behaviour Service

In some cases, a multi professional meeting will be arranged to discuss the case further.

Some children will neither meet thresholds nor be able to access individual therapies.

Managing disclosures

Any disclosure must be recorded in line with our Child Protection Policy and passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. All safeguarding concerns will be treated in confidence. For more information about Safeguarding, including our policies, visit the Safeguarding page on our website.

Section 2 - Health and Welfare of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are valued and welcomed into schools. We communicate regularly, consult and engage with parents/carers through newsletters, assemblies, parent meetings etc.

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing. We work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Working closely with our local partners including the Children's Centre, Health Care professionals and partner schools.
- Visiting all YR parents at home before a child starts school. Y3 parent meeting.
- Encouraging parents into school for events such as an end of term Exhibition.
- Offering 1:1 additional meetings/calls with our Family Support Workers.

- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.)
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting and academic skills, for example workshops on reading.
- Providing an open-door policy with access to staff.
- Working hard to develop a close relationship with parents and carers which allow us to offer support.

Section 3 - Health and Welfare of Staff

We recognise that a healthy happy workforce is required to deliver the best education for all our pupils. Our expectation is that staff have a responsibility to support their own mental health by accessing appropriate support, looking after their own mental health and to develop resilience and coping strategies. As a federation we are committed to encouraging staff to develop a good work life balance and lead healthy working lives.

We offer the following to support our staff's positive mental health:

- A dedicated staff room for relaxation and healthy eating.
- An induction with a member of SLT (Senior Leadership Team) into their role.
- Performance meetings three times a year to discuss how their role is progressing.
- We organise social events throughout the year for staff to participate in.
- We promote eating lunch together during and INSET day.
- SLT have an open-door policy for all staff.
- Staff well-being training and a designated well-being team and Mental Health Leader.
- Take staff mental wellbeing into consideration when deploying staff to various roles around school.
- Use surveys so staff can express views about workload.
- Reasonable adjustments for staff with recognised mental health issues.
- Sign post staff to appropriate support mechanisms such as, charities, GP, and Relate. Employee helpline numbers are displayed around each school.
- Staff meetings are held weekly where individuals can air their views and feel supported.
- Recognise individual staff strengths through initiatives such as positive mentions in newsletters; individual and public thanks and praise; feedback from observations; learning walks.
- Encourage and support staff to put into perspective the everyday challenges of working with pupils.
- Help staff to set professional boundaries for themselves such as not sharing their telephone numbers; not texting parents with personal phones and not having their phones out during curriculum time.
- Remind staff not to share personal details such as phone numbers and not to interact with parents on social media. Staff with children in school should be aware and take measures to protect themselves. For example, set high privacy settings on Facebook.

- Flexible working applications are always seriously considered within the confines of what is best for the pupils.
- No expectation to be at work outside of contracted/directed hours or during school holidays.
- Return to work meetings following an absence from work.

Training

Annual training takes place for all staff as part of the safeguarding training. Other specific training will be utilised as appropriate.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our appraisal process and additional CPD will be offered throughout the year where it becomes appropriate.

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

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- All our Safeguarding Policies
- Managing Sickness and Absence Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy

Managing stress

We recognise that working in a school can be stressful and that there are pinch points in the year where workloads can be high. Leaders will aim to plan out events and deadlines to ensure that there is a balance during each term and also communicate expectations and deadlines in advance through issuing a half termly management plan.

Signs of stress at work

To support staff to identify when they may need to ask for help we ask staff to consider the following:

If stressed, an employee may notice changes in the way they think or feel, for example:

- feeling negative
- being indecisive
- feeling isolated
- feeling nervous
- being unable to concentrate

They may act differently, for example:

- eat more or less than usual

- smoke, drink or take drugs 'to cope'
- have difficulty sleeping

If staff are feeling stressed then we encourage them to speak to another colleague and SLT are happy to provide support and a listening ear. We ask staff to consider which of the following factors may be contributing to their feelings of stress as this can help leaders to provide effective support:

- Demands of the role- do they feel they can cope with the demands of their role?
- Control – do they feel they have control over the way they complete their work?
- Support, skills, resources and information to do their work
- Relationships with other staff, parents and pupils
- Role – do they fully understand what is expected and their roles, responsibilities?
- Change- are they coping with change?
- Stress outside of work- are there factors outside work that are contributing difficulties in maintaining a home/school balance?

After meeting with a colleague, we will support staff through one or more of the following ways:

- A risk assessment.
- Support with organising tasks/workloads.
- SLT reflection resulting in adaptation of policies or clarification or a change to workloads.
- Further training or support.
- Mediation between colleagues.
- An Occupational Health referral.
- Follow up check-ins.
- Designated time to complete specific tasks.
- Signposting to outside help.

Further links and sources of support:

Acas www.acas.org.uk
Information on stress, and employer and employee rights, in the workplace

Alcoholics Anonymous www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk
Fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other to recover from alcoholism.

Carers UK www.carersuk.org
The voice of carers

CBI www.cbi.org.uk
Guidance to businesses on managing stress at work

Department of Health www.gov.uk/government/organisation/department-of-health
Information on dealing with stress and mental health problems, including the use of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

Dignity at Work Partnership www.dignityatwork.org
Information and guidance on bullying in the workplace

The Equality and Human Rights Commission www.equalityhumanrights.com
The commission is working to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality, protect human rights and to build good relations, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society.

Gingerbread www.gingerbread.org.uk
Gingerbread and One Parent Families have now merged to provide better support and a bigger voice to 1.8 million lone parents and their children throughout England and Wales.

HSE http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/
Information on the stress management standards

Local Government Employers www.local.gov.uk
Guidance for all councils on stress prevention and management

Mindful Employer www.mindfulemployer.net
Information and guidance on managing stress and mental health in the workplace

Mind- www.mind.org.uk

NASUWT www.nasuwt.org.uk
Information on a whole range of issues related to stress and wellbeing

NHS 111 http://www.nhs.uk/111
National Health Service advice and guidance on health matters

Princess Royal Trust for Carers http://www.carers.org
Here to improve carers' lives by fighting for equality and recognition for carers.

Relate http://www.relate.org.uk
UK's largest provider of relationship counselling and sex therapy.

Samaritans http://www.samaritans.org
Offers confidential, non-judgemental support to individuals.

Teacher Support Network
http://teachersupport.info

Work Life Balance Centre http://www.worklifebalancecentre.org

Exists to help people restore control over their workload and working lives we enable them to cut down overworking and so make new decisions about how they spend their time.

World Health Organisation
http://www.who.int/occupational_health/publications/en/oehstress.pdf Publication on work organisation and stress