



St Andrew's Primary School Mentally Healthy Schools Policy

Policy Lead: SENCO and Senior Mental Health Lead

Review Cycle: Annual

Date to Review: September 2027

1. Policy Statement

At St Andrew's Primary School, we are committed to creating a nurturing, inclusive and mentally healthy environment where every child, family and member of staff feels valued, respected and supported. We recognise that positive mental health and wellbeing are fundamental to successful learning, healthy relationships and positive life outcomes.

We believe that mental health is everyone's responsibility. Through our whole-school approach, we actively promote emotional wellbeing, resilience, self-regulation and positive relationships, ensuring that children develop the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to thrive both academically and personally.

Our approach is rooted in empathy, compassion and understanding. We are proud to be a Trauma Informed School where every child is supported to feel safe, secure and ready to learn.

2. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing for all pupils, staff and families.
- Develop children's resilience, self-esteem and emotional literacy.
- Ensure that all children know where to seek support when they are worried or distressed.
- Provide early identification and intervention for children experiencing difficulties.
- Foster strong partnerships between school, families and external agencies.
- Create a culture where mental health is openly discussed and stigma is reduced.
- Ensure staff are confident in recognising signs of emotional distress and know how to respond appropriately.
- Support children to develop healthy coping strategies and self-regulation skills.

3. Our Whole School Approach

Mental health and wellbeing are embedded throughout school life and are not viewed as standalone initiatives.

At St Andrew's Primary School, we:

- Place children's emotional wellbeing at the heart of all decision-making.

- Promote positive relationships based on trust, safety and belonging.
- Use restorative and relational approaches when supporting children.
- Foster an inclusive environment where diversity is valued and celebrated.
- Ensure all children feel listened to and respected.
- Promote positive mental health through the curriculum and wider school experiences.
- Work closely with families to provide timely support and intervention.

4. Curriculum Provision

Mental health and wellbeing education is delivered through our comprehensive PSHE curriculum, **myHappyMind**.

The myHappyMind programme provides children with a strong understanding of:

- How their brain works.
- Emotional regulation strategies.
- Building resilience and self-confidence.
- Positive relationships.
- Gratitude and mindfulness.
- Healthy coping mechanisms.
- Understanding and managing feelings.

Learning is reinforced throughout daily classroom practice and linked to wider opportunities across the curriculum.

5. Leadership and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring that the mental health and wellbeing of pupils remains a strategic priority and receives regular updates regarding provision, outcomes and developments.

Senior Mental Health Lead

The school's SENCO is the designated Senior Mental Health Lead and is responsible for:

- Coordinating the school's mental health and wellbeing strategy.
- Supporting staff with concerns relating to pupils.
- Working with families and external agencies.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of interventions.
- Ensuring appropriate pathways of support are in place.
- Keeping abreast of current guidance and best practice.

Mental Health First Aider

A member of the Senior Leadership Team has completed Mental Health First Aider training and supports the wider mental health provision across the school.

All Staff

All staff:

- Prioritise children's mental health and wellbeing.
- Build positive and trusting relationships.
- Recognise signs of emotional distress.
- Follow safeguarding procedures where necessary.
- Seek advice promptly when concerns arise.
- Promote emotional wellbeing through daily interactions.

All staff have receive continued professional development (CPD) to ensure they understand the importance of supporting mental wellbeing and know who to speak to should concerns arise.

6. Trauma-Informed Practice

St Andrew's Primary School is committed to being a trauma-informed school. We recognise that children's experiences, both within and beyond school, can significantly impact their emotional wellbeing, behaviour, relationships and readiness to learn. We understand that adverse or traumatic experiences may affect how children respond to situations and that behaviour is often a way of communicating a need rather than simply being a choice.

Our staff are trained to look beyond behaviours and seek to understand the underlying causes of distress. We strive to create an environment where children feel physically and emotionally safe, valued, understood and connected to others.

Rather than asking, *"What is wrong with this child?"* we encourage staff to consider, *"What might this child have experienced?"* and *"What are they communicating through their behaviour?"*

Our Trauma-Informed Principles

At St Andrew's Primary School, we:

- Build strong, trusting and consistent relationships with children and families.
- Ensure that every child feels safe in school and receives a warm welcome every morning
- Create emotionally and physically safe learning environments.
- Respond to behaviour with curiosity, empathy and compassion.
- Recognise that regulation must come before reasoning and learning.
- Understand that all behaviour is communication.
- Promote inclusion, belonging and connection.
- Support children to develop emotional regulation and resilience.
- Maintain high expectations whilst providing appropriate support.
- Work collaboratively with families and external agencies.
- Celebrate strengths and success whilst recognising individual needs.

Relational Approach

We believe that positive relationships are the foundation of emotional wellbeing and successful learning.

All staff work hard to ensure that children:

- Feel known and valued.
- Have trusted adults they can talk to.
- Experience consistency and predictability.
- Feel respected and listened to.
- Know that mistakes are opportunities to learn.

Where challenges arise, staff seek to repair and strengthen relationships through restorative conversations rather than relying solely on sanctions.

Emotional Regulation Support

Many children require support to recognise, understand and manage their emotions. Staff explicitly teach emotional regulation strategies and model healthy ways of managing feelings.

Children are encouraged to:

- Identify and name emotions.
- Understand physical signs of emotions.
- Develop self-awareness.
- Use calming and regulation techniques.
- Reflect upon feelings and experiences.
- Build resilience when facing challenges.

Staff recognise that children who are dysregulated are often unable to access learning effectively and therefore prioritise helping children return to a calm and regulated state before addressing incidents or discussing consequences.

Safe Spaces for Regulation

We provide a range of designated spaces to support children's emotional wellbeing and self-regulation.

The Rainbow Room

The Rainbow Room offers a nurturing environment where children can receive targeted emotional support, develop emotional literacy and practise regulation strategies with trusted adults. This room is also used for children to meet with outside professionals including therapists.

The Nest

The Nest provides a calm and supportive space where children can feel safe, reduce anxiety and receive additional emotional support when required.

Sensory Areas

The sensory areas provide spaces with low level lighting, soft seating, tents, sensory resources, which help children to self regulate and co regulate, throughout the day

Calm Corners

Every classroom contains a Calm Corner where children can independently access resources and strategies to help them regulate emotions and return successfully to learning.

These spaces are not used as sanctions or exclusions from learning. Instead, they provide opportunities for co-regulation, reflection and emotional support.

Co-Regulation Before Self-Regulation

We recognise that many children need support from trusted adults before they can successfully regulate independently.

Staff use strategies such as:

- Calm and reassuring communication.
- Emotion coaching techniques.
- Active listening.
- Validation of feelings.
- Regulating body language and tone of voice.
- Predictable routines and expectations.
- Positive reinforcement.

Through repeated experiences of co-regulation, children gradually develop the ability to self-regulate and manage challenges more independently.

Supporting Children Following Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

The school recognises that some children may have experienced:

- Bereavement.
- Domestic abuse.
- Family separation.
- Neglect or abuse.
- Mental health difficulties within the family.
- Significant life changes.
- Poverty and hardship.
- Other adverse childhood experiences.

Where appropriate, individual support plans may be implemented in partnership with families and external professionals to ensure children receive the support they need.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

We understand that parents and carers know their children best and are essential partners in supporting emotional wellbeing.

Our trauma-informed approach extends to working with families through:

- Compassionate and non-judgemental communication.
- An open-door policy.
- Early identification and intervention.
- Collaborative problem-solving.
- Signposting to external services and support.
- Celebrating successes as well as addressing concerns.

Parents can be confident that concerns will be listened to, understood and responded to with empathy and professionalism.

Staff Training and Professional Development

All staff receive regular professional development to ensure they understand:

- The impact of trauma on child development.
- Attachment and relational approaches.
- Emotional regulation and co-regulation.
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
- Mental health and wellbeing.
- Behaviour as communication.
- Appropriate referral pathways and support mechanisms.

This ensures that every member of staff contributes to a consistent, compassionate and trauma-informed culture throughout the school.

Impact of Our Trauma-Informed Approach

Through our trauma-informed practice, we aim for all children to:

- Feel safe, secure and valued.
- Develop trusting relationships with adults and peers.
- Improve emotional literacy and self-awareness.
- Develop effective self-regulation strategies.
- Build resilience and confidence.
- Demonstrate positive learning behaviours.
- Achieve their full academic, social and emotional potential.

By embedding trauma-informed practice throughout the school, St Andrew's Primary School creates an environment where every child is understood, supported and empowered to thrive.

7. Early Identification and Support

We recognise the importance of early intervention.

Staff may identify concerns through:

- Daily interactions.
- Changes in behaviour or presentation.
- Attendance patterns.
- Discussions with parents.
- Pupil voice activities.
- Safeguarding concerns.
- Emotional wellbeing assessments.

Where concerns are identified:

- Staff will speak to the Senior Mental Health Lead.
- Parents will be involved at the earliest opportunity.
- Appropriate support plans or interventions may be implemented.
- Referrals to external services will be made when necessary.

Our open-door approach ensures that concerns are addressed quickly and support is provided as early as possible.

8. Self-Regulation and Emotional Support Provision

St Andrew's Primary School provides a range of supportive environments to help children regulate emotions and access support when required.

These include:

The Rainbow Room

A nurturing space where children can receive targeted emotional support, develop regulation strategies and access intervention programmes.

The Nest

A safe and supportive environment designed to help children feel calm, secure and emotionally ready to learn.

Calm Corners

Every classroom contains a designated Calm Corner where pupils can access regulation tools and strategies to support emotional wellbeing and self-management.

These spaces help children develop independence, emotional awareness and self-regulation skills.

9. Pupil Voice and Leadership

We value the contribution that pupils make to promoting mental health and wellbeing across the school.

Our **Mental Wellbeing Champions** play an important role in supporting positive wellbeing initiatives.

Their responsibilities include:

- Supporting the SENCO during Chill Out Club.
- Promoting wellbeing across the school.
- Encouraging children to seek help when needed.
- Being positive role models.
- Gathering pupil voice regarding wellbeing provision.

Chill Out Club

Chill Out Club operates every lunchtime and provides children with a safe, supportive and welcoming space to:

- Talk about worries or concerns.
- Develop friendships.
- Access emotional support.
- Take part in wellbeing activities.
- Feel listened to and valued.

10. Working with Parents and Families

Strong partnerships with parents are central to our approach.

At St Andrew's Primary School we:

- Maintain excellent relationships with families.
- Operate an open-door policy.
- Encourage early communication regarding concerns.
- Provide advice, guidance and signposting.
- Work collaboratively to identify appropriate support.
- Ensure all families feel respected, valued and free from judgement.

We recognise that supporting a child's wellbeing is most effective when school and home work together.

11. Safeguarding and Mental Health

Mental health concerns can, in some cases, be linked to safeguarding issues.

All staff understand that:

- Any safeguarding concern must be reported immediately in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy.
- Mental health concerns will be considered alongside wider safeguarding needs.
- Child protection procedures take precedence where there is risk of harm.

The safeguarding team is highly visible throughout the school. Posters displaying photographs of key safeguarding staff and governors help children easily identify trusted adults who can support them.

Information about organisations such as the NSPCC and other support services is displayed prominently around school and regularly discussed with pupils.

12. Staff Wellbeing

We recognise that staff wellbeing has a direct impact on the wellbeing of pupils.

We are committed to:

- Promoting a supportive and caring workplace culture.
- Encouraging open communication.
- Providing access to professional support where appropriate.
- Ensuring workload and wellbeing are regularly considered.

- Delivering ongoing professional development relating to mental health and wellbeing.
- Offering supervision to staff where they can talk openly about sensitive issues

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be monitored through:

- Pupil voice activities.
- Parent feedback.
- Staff feedback.
- Records of intervention and support.
- Attendance and behaviour monitoring.
- Safeguarding data.
- Governor monitoring visits.
- Review of wellbeing provision and outcomes.

The effectiveness of the school's mental health provision will be evaluated annually to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of pupils, families and staff.

14. Conclusion

At St Andrew's Primary School, we strive to create a culture where mental health is valued as highly as physical health. Through strong relationships, trauma-informed practice, high-quality wellbeing education, early intervention and close partnership with families, we ensure that every child is supported to feel safe, happy, resilient and ready to succeed.

"Every child deserves to feel heard, understood, supported and valued."