



Magdalen Gates Primary School and Nursery

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Formally adopted by the Governing Board of:-	Magdalen Gates Primary School
Approved by:-	Jessica Bannister, Paul Gille and Rupert Ephithite
Chair of Governors:-	Orla Kennelly and Paul Guille
Last updated:-	October 2025
Next review date:-	October 2026

1. Aims of this policy:

All of us can have periods of time when our mental health takes a dip - this includes the children in our care, their families and the school's own staff.

This policy sets out our 'whole school' approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing (MH&W), on behalf of all members of our school community. This document explains how MH&W is supported through the curriculum, leadership team and overall ethos of the school. MH&W is embedded in our core school value of 'working together'.

The policy explains how signposting and interventions are used to support those of us who may be experiencing low levels of wellbeing and/or mental health difficulties. No member of our school community should face discrimination, and the school is committed to helping identify these difficulties and supporting people to overcome them.

Magdalen Gates Primary School and Nursery recognises the need for a robust approach, now more than ever. A study of MH&W needs in Norfolk and Waveney in 2023 identified that *'the prevalence of mental health problems among children is higher in Norfolk and Waveney than the England average and increasing'*. The study shows that anxiety appears to be more common than depression. The study states *'put simply, in Norfolk and Waveney, it is more likely children are worried than sad.'*

2. Links to other school policies:

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Staff Handbook and the following policies:

- Personal Development (RSHE) Curriculum
- Appraisal procedures
- Behaviour
- Special Educational Needs (SEND)
- Safeguarding
- Health and Safety
- Medical Needs
- Equal Opportunities statement
- Whistleblowing
- Attendance
- Code of conduct
- Online safety policy
- Menopause statement
- Staff recruitment and retention

3. Roles and responsibilities within school:

Mental Health Lead (Level 4 accredited)

The school has a designated Mental Health Lead. They act as a champion for MH&W, reporting to the Leadership Team.

Their role is not to necessarily provide interventions, but to have a whole school overview and to coordinate the school's approach to positive MH&W:

As endorsed by the Department for Education, the Mental Health Lead will:

- Oversee the whole school approach to MH&W, including how it is reflected in the design of behaviour policies, the curriculum and pastoral support, how staff are supported with their own MH&W, and how the school engages pupils and parents/carers in MH&W;
- Support the identification of at-risk children and children exhibiting signs of mental ill health;
- Have knowledge of the local mental health services and refer children and young people into NHS services where it is appropriate to do so;
- Coordinate the MH&W needs of young people within the school and have oversight of the delivery of interventions where these are being delivered in the educational setting;
- Oversee and monitor the outcomes of interventions, on children and young people's education and MH&W;
- Support staff in contact with children with MH&W needs to help raise awareness, and give all staff the confidence to work with young people;
- To lead the Wellbeing Working Party (WBWP).

Leadership

The Mental Health Lead reports directly to the Headteacher and meets regularly with them to discuss the MH&W provision for staff and children. The agenda for these meetings may consist of:

- Staff wellbeing provision and activities
- Child wellbeing provision and activities
- Parental engagement provision and activities
- Monitoring of identification and outcomes of pupil interventions
- Monitoring individual support needs
- Policy review (if required)
- Review of Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan (if not covered in the points above)

The Mental Health Lead presents a written report for the Governing Body on MH&W across the school. They may also be involved in meetings to support staff or pupils with mental health needs. The Mental Health Lead may also need to review provision as a result of individual mental health needs, even if they are not directly involved in organising the support.

Emotional Literacy Support Advisors (ELSAs)

ELSAs are trained to plan and deliver programmes of support to pupils in the school who may be experiencing temporary or long-term emotional and wellbeing needs. They can teach social and emotional skills, coping mechanisms or simply provide a safe space for children to talk about and process their feelings. Our aim is to have an ELSA practitioner present on the Wellbeing Working Party.

Parent Support Advisor (PSA)

The PSA helps parents and families with a wide range of issues which may affect their own and their child's wellbeing, both in school and outside of school, such as: financial worries, parenting challenges, managing relationships and practical issues such as completing paperwork. The PSA nurtures relationships with families, ensuring they are available for informal conversations at the school gates and private meetings where needed. The PSA is part of the school's safeguarding team and seeks to represent the perspective of parents wherever possible. The PSA is also part of the Wellbeing Working Party and supports parents through the referral processes for MH&W support.

Mental Health Champions

The school's Mental Health Champions are staff members who have completed specific training with the purpose of creating a culture where mental health is talked about openly and where positive mental health practices are promoted. The champions will also help lead staff training and development and signpost services to children, families and staff as and when needed.

4. Children

Curriculum

Our RSHE curriculum aims to create happy, healthy and confident children who are aware of their rights and responsibilities. Children will know how to build healthy relationships, where and when to seek help and how to keep themselves safe. MH&W is an important strand of the curriculum and is taught discreetly. In the early years this starts off with identifying emotions and develops as the children get older to thinking about the importance of self-care and techniques to maintain and improve mental health. The curriculum is supplemented with 'Wellbeing Wednesdays' throughout the year, when a different aspect of mental health (e.g. anxiety) is focused on throughout the school. We also access workshops through our partnerships with the Mental Health Support Team (MHST), the Schools and Community team (S&C) and the Community Sports Foundation (CSF).

Additional Support

When a child is identified as needing additional MH&W support, the next steps that we would take in school are as described below:

Identification

The first step in providing additional support is identifying what the need is. Children with MH&W needs are often identified by those closest to them: their parents or classroom staff. These concerns are usually logged by staff on the school's internal Child Protection Online Management system (CPOMs). At this point the WBWP considers each case and plans for the next step. This could be a referral for ELSA, MHST support, a CAMH referral, a PSA session or an invitation to Lunchtime Club or Care Rangers (see below).

Support

This school tailors its support for our children and young people according to their needs. As a school we have access to the following services, sourced internally or externally:

- Care Rangers: a weekly lunchtime (Key Stage 1) and afterschool (Key Stage 2) club for young carers
- Lunchtime clubs: daily provision supervised by senior teachers or external facilitators, for children who may be experiencing difficulties being amongst a larger group of children on the playground
- Playground Ambassadors: a small group of KS2 children (selected half-termly) responsible for supporting play and friendships on the KS1 playground
- Emotional Literacy Support Advisor (ELSA) sessions
- Mental Health Support Team (MHST) sessions, based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHs)

Monitoring

The WBWP meet weekly to discuss the provision for our children and update the plans according to the present need in the school. The Mental Health Lead, Headteacher and SENDCo meet regularly to monitor the MH&W provision for children.

5. Staff

The leadership team and governors intend to support all staff whilst they work with us and create a culture where staff feel that they can be themselves and ask for the help that they need. Listed below are some of the specific ways that we aim to support staff:

Support Plans

All staff are offered staff support plans as and when needed. These are designed to meet the needs of staff who feel they need adjustments or support in their role. These changes could be permanent if the staff member requires a long-term change or adjustment. However, they may temporary if the member of staff is going through a period of low wellbeing and/or poor mental health. These plans are co-created with the member of staff and the Headteacher or the Deputy Head.

Stress Action Plans

All staff are able to complete a stress action plan at any time of the academic year or at any point in their career. These are designed to identify aspects of the work environment that cause stress and put actions in place to mitigate against them. These plans are co-created with the member of staff and the Mental Health Lead or the Headteacher.

Appraisals

The appraisal cycle is based on the 'Signs of Safety' framework and is designed to aid conversations around what is already working well, any worries or concerns and any hopes for the future. Teachers all have their appraisals with the Headteacher or Deputy Head and support staff with a member of the leadership team or the appropriate line manager.

Additional Support

As employees, staff who feel they need additional support are able to access the following services:

- The Education Support Partnership – a free service for all those working in education in the UK, 08000 562 561, <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/>
- The Norfolk Wellbeing Service <https://www.nandwtalkingtherapies.org.uk/>
- Headspace for Educators <https://www.headspace.com/educators>

Monitoring

In addition to regular meetings between the Mental Health Lead and Headteacher, staff wellbeing is monitored through an annual anonymous staff survey. The information gathered from this survey helps the WBWP and leadership team to plan for next steps to improve the overall wellbeing levels in the school.

Whilst each resource we use is slightly different, we assess the usefulness and quality of tools, support groups, wellbeing provision and other resources by asking the following questions:

- What is the resource?
- What is its purpose?
- What do we want to use it for?
- How many people will it be accessible to?
- Is there evidence it will work for that purpose?
- What are the benefits for the people utilising the resource?
- What are the limitations of utilising the resource?
- What is its cost-effectiveness?

Raising Concerns

If a staff member has concerns about the MH&W of a colleague they are able to talk in confidence to either the Mental Health Lead or their line manager.

If someone has a concern about the MH&W of a pupil, they should initially speak to their class teacher, the SENDCo, the Mental Health Lead or the Headteacher.

Training

As part of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan, the Senior Leadership Team assess and review the training needs of teaching and non-teaching staff, Governors, Senior Leaders, student teachers, volunteers and others who may be working in our schools.

During the induction process, those who have not received the mental health training identified appropriate to their role will be offered the training at the first available opportunity.

All staff receive training on helping them to recognise the symptoms that might suggest that a mental health difficulty is affecting their daily lives.

6. Feedback and Review

All feedback relating to this Policy, or the implementation of it, can be addressed in confidence to the Mental Health Lead and/or the Headteacher.

People reporting concerns about the implementation of this policy may wish to also refer to the Whistleblowing Policy if appropriate.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the governors.