




At Culgaith CE School we believe that we are all wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14) and we strive to celebrate the unique qualities of all our students and promote ambition for all. Our distinctly Christian ethos enables us to weave our Christian values into the fabric of the school, providing ambitious learning opportunities, promoting achievement in every area and nurturing social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

Relevant roles held and by whom (correct at the time of publishing)	
Mental Health Governor	Elaine Ellar
Senior Mental Health Lead:	Fiona Cresswell
Head teacher/ DSL	Lynn Dobinson

Approved by ¹	
Name:	L. Dobinson
Position:	Head teacher
Signed:	
Date:	10.06.2025
Proposed review date ² :	June 2028

We focus on Friendship, Forgiveness, Perseverance, Respect, Courage, Generosity and Compassion and believe that these values can help children learn about what affects their mental health, what they can do to support and maintain positive mental health and where and who they can go to if they need help and support with their mental health and well-being. We hope that by providing an environment based on these values that children feel supported, valued and able to access help and support when they need it and that in doing so they can help us reduce the stigma surrounding mental health and well-being.

1, Why Mental Health and Well-Being is important?

At Culgaith CE School, we aim to promote positive mental health and well-being for our whole school community; pupils, staff, parents and carers, and recognise how important mental health and well-being is to our lives in just the same way as physical health.

We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. Persistent mental health problems may lead to pupils having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice identifies social, emotional and mental health as one of the four areas of Special Educational Need.

All children go through ups and downs throughout their school career and some face significant life events. However, in 2022, 18% of children aged 7 to 16 had a probable mental health disorder this was an increase from 1 in 9 (12.1%) in 2017 and 1 in 6 (16.7%) in 2021 (NHS Digital 2022). Since the Covid pandemic, the vast majority of school staff (95%) have witnessed increased levels of pupil anxiety. 86% noted an increase in poor/low self-esteem, 76% reported an increase in depression and 68% witnessed an increase in sustained feelings of anger (Place2be & NAHT, 2022). The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that “in order to help their

pupils succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy”.

In response to the deteriorating mental health and well-being in children and young people, the DfE have introduced Senior Mental Health Leadership training for schools to enable them to implement a whole school approach to mental health and well-being. This training is aligned with the principles of Public Health England and the DfE policy ‘Promoting children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing: a whole school approach’ (2021).

Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting pupils’ well-being and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

2. Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out:

- How we promote positive mental health
 - How we prevent mental health problems
 - How we identify and support pupils with mental health needs
 - How we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent mental health problems getting worse
 - Key information about some common mental health problems
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- Where parents, staff and pupils can get advice and support

3, Definition of Mental Health and Well Being

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and well-being:

“...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 or her community”

Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children to:

- Feel confident in themselves
- Be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
- Be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others
- Cope with the stresses of everyday life
- Manage times of stress and be able to deal with change
- Learn and achieve

4, Links to other Policies

This policy links to our policies on:

- Safeguarding
- Inclusion
- Looked after Children
- Anti-bullying, behaviour and discipline
- Personal Social Health Education (PHSE)
- Child Protection
- Online Safety
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Links with the whole school behaviour policy are especially important as behaviour, whether it is disruptive, aggressive, anxious, withdrawn, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need. We consider behaviour to be a message.

5, A Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing

At Culgaith CE School we take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing that aims to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to work in a proactive way to avoid problems arising. We do this by:

- Creating and applying consistent ethos, policies and behaviours that support positive mental health and resilience that everyone understands.
- Adhering to a positive, restorative approach to behaviour management
- Helping children socially to form and maintain relationships, support each other, and seek help when they need to
- Teaching pupils social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health so that they understand their emotions and feelings better.
- Promoting self-esteem and ensuring children understand their importance in the world.
- Helping children to be resilient learners and to manage setbacks.
- Identifying children who have mental health challenges and planning to support their needs, including working with parents and carers and specialist services.
- Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.
- Developing an open culture where it is normal to talk about mental health and wellbeing.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging
- Promoting our pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision making
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Providing opportunities to reflect
- Enabling access to appropriate support
- Mental health and PSHE/RSE for all year groups
- Wellbeing week and access to information around the school.

6. Staff Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children, will require additional help and support and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support that they need,

All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as long-term illness, having a parent with a mental health problem, bereavement, family breakdown etc. They also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of belonging and worth and emotional literacy.

Culgaith CE School Mental Health Team, include:

- Head Teacher: Lynn Dobinson
- Mental Health Governor: Elaine Ellar
- Designated Safeguarding Lead: Lynn Dobinson
- Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Leeanne Parkin

- SENCO: Samantha McWhirter
- Named Senior Mental Health Lead: Fiona Cresswell
- Named Mental Health Deputy: Lynn Dobinson

Our mental health leads:

- Lead and work with all staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and well-being
- Work with the PSHE lead regarding the teaching of mental health issues
- Provide support and advice to staff and organise training and updates
- Keep staff up to date with information about what support is available
- Is the first point of contact and communicates with mental health services
- Liaise with and make referrals to outside agencies

Our Mental Health Leads **do not** diagnose mental health problems.

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to pupils and their families. Support includes:

- Inclusion manager
- Safeguarding/Child Protection Team
- Support staff to manage mental health needs of children
- SENCO, who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including pupils whose mental health problems may need special educational provision
- Learning Mentor
- School Nursing Service

- CAMHS - core meetings to support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils

7, Supporting Pupils Positive Mental Health

We believe we have a key role in promoting children's positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our school has developed a range of strategies and approaches including:

Pupil led activities

- School council
- Campaigns/activities/assemblies to raise mental health awareness

Transition Support

- Support for vulnerable children through one to one and small group work (Lego Therapy, social and communication groups)
- ELSA groups
- Transition meetings with parents/carers and pupils and staff
- Yearly transition passports for vulnerable children
- Transition visits to new classrooms/schools for vulnerable children

Class Activities

- Question/worry jar
- kindness/compliments Boards
- Mindfulness and breathing meditation in class

Whole School

- Wellbeing Focus Topics/Assemblies
- ELSA resources
- Anna Freud *Schools in Mind* resources
- PSHE lessons
- Displays and information promoting positive mental health and signposting for help and support

- Using the power of reading to explore themes and learn about emotions, feelings, loss, change, resilience etc through works of fiction.

Small group Activities

- Small friendship, social skills group
- Lunch club support
- Sanctuary room
- Therapeutic activities including art, lego and relaxation and mindfulness groups

Teaching about Mental Health and Emotional Well Being

Through PSHE we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help children be more resilient, understand about mental health and help reduce the stigma of mental health problems.

Our approach is to:

- Provide a safe environment to enable pupils to express themselves and be listened to
- Ensure the safety and welfare of pupils is paramount
- Identify appropriate support for children based on their needs
- Involve parents and carers when their child needs support
- Involve pupils in the care and support they have
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with pupils and keep parents and carers updated.

8. Early Identification

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways, including:

- Identifying individuals that might need support e.g. through the school vulnerability indicator spreadsheet

- Working closely with school administration staff who are often the first point of contact for families seeking support
- Induction meetings for pupils/families joining after the EYFS years
- Analysing behaviours, exclusions from class, attendance etc
- Pupil surveys at the beginning of the school terms
- Staff report concerns about individual pupils to the SENCO and Designated Safeguarding Team
- Worry boxes in each class for pupils to raise concerns which are checked by the class teacher and/or members of the mental health team
- Weekly staff meeting for staff to raise concerns about individual children
- Parental meetings
- Gathering information from school transfer or transition documents
- enabling/empowering pupils to raise concerns to class teacher and support staff
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns through the school class teacher or to any member of staff - we have an 'Open Door Policy'

All staff have had training on the protective and risk factors (Appendix 1), types of mental health needs (Appendix 2) and signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health problems. Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the SENCO and Designated Safeguarding Team.

Signs that a pupil may be experiencing mental health problems might include:

- Non verbal behaviour
- Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in mood, activity or eating/sleeping habits
- Lowering academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self harm or suicide

- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Not wanting to get changed for PE and not wanting to participate in PE
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non accidental
- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Staff are aware that mental health needs such as anxiety might appear as non compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development.

If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the schools Child Protection Policy and Procedures are implemented.

Verbal Disclosures by Pupils

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non judgmental to pupils who verbally disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of pupils is paramount and staff listen rather than advise. Staff are clear to pupils that the concern will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Team and recorded in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil.

Non-verbal Disclosure by Pupils

Staff also recognise persistent and unusual non verbal disclosures in behaviour with NICE (National Institute for Care and Excellence) recommendations that behaviour may be an unmet need or message.

Confidentiality

All disclosures are recorded and held on the pupils confidential file on Scholarpack, including date, name of pupil and member of staff to who they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps.

Assessment, Intervention and Support

All concerns are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Team and recorded on Scholarpack. We then implement our assessment system based on levels of need to ensure that pupils get the support they need, either from within the school or from external specialist services. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems from escalating.

We recognise that just like physical health mental health and emotional well-being can vary at any given time and is fluid and changes, there are no absolutes.

NEED The level of need is based on discussions at the regular Inclusion meetings with key members of staff	EVIDENCE BASED INTERVENTION & SUPPORT The kinds of intervention and support provided will be decided in consultations with key members of staff, parents and pupils. FOR EXAMPLE	MONITORING
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<p>HIGHEST NEED</p>	<p>CAMHS assessment, 1:1 or family support or treatment. Consultation with school staff and other agencies.</p> <p>School Mentor, Counselling or 1:1 support.</p> <p>Educational Psychologist involvement. External agency support that provides 1:1 support and group work.</p> <p>If the school, professionals and/or parents conclude that a</p>	<p>All pupils needing targeted individualised support will have an Individual Care Plan drawn up, setting out: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The needs of the pupil ● How the pupil will be supported ● Actions to provide that support ● Any special requirements <p>Pupils and parents/carers will be involved in the plan.</p> <p>The plan and interventions are monitored, reviewed and evaluated to</p>
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	<p>statutory Education, Health and Care assessment is required, we refer to the SEND Policy.</p>	<p>assess the impact eg through a strengths and difficulties questionnaire.</p> <p>Multi agency meetings and regular reviews and feedback with parents/carers.</p> <p>Early Help referral and Children's Services referral if required.</p> <p>Discussion, advice and support in Child and Mental Health Services (CAMHS).</p> <p>Weekly staff briefing.</p>
SOME NEED	<p>Access to in school sanctuary/nurture space.</p>	<p>As above</p>
LOW NEED	<p>General support via class teacher/TA.</p> <p>Assigned a learning mentor with regular meetings, 'check ins'.</p> <p>Access to in school sanctuary/nurture space.</p>	<p>Class teachers and support staff will continue to monitor.</p> <p>Regular check ins with their learning mentor.</p>

9. Working with Specialist Services to get access to the right Specialist Support and Treatment

In some cases a pupils mental health need may require support from specialist services. These might include anxiety, depression, school refusal or complex needs.

We have links with a range of specialist services and have regular contact with them to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the pupils provision e.g. Educational Psychologist

School referrals to specialist services will be made via the SENCO following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents/carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupils specific need.

10. Involving parents and Carers

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and well-being of their children, and recognise that they may also need support while supporting their child.

To support parents and carers:

- We provide information and signpost to organisations that support children's mental health, wellbeing services and parenting programmes.
- Have an Open Door Policy where parents/carers can talk to school staff
- Having regular sensitive and supportive review meetings.

When a concern has been raised the school will:

- Contact parents/carers and meet with them

- In most cases parents/carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as child protection issues.
- Offer information to take away and signpost places for further information
- Be available for follow up calls
- Make a record of the meeting
- Agree an Action Plan
- Discuss how the parent/carer can support their child
- Keep parents/carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions.

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of harm.

We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. The pupils mental health and well being are our primary concern, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

11. Involving Pupils

We seek pupils views and feedback about our approach to mental health and whole school mental health activities through surveys, questionnaires, class questions and suggestion boxes.

12. Supporting and Training Staff

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and well being and how to be able to promote positive mental health and well being, identify mental health needs early in pupils and know what to do and where to get help.

Staff with a specific responsibility for mental health and well-being have more specialised training and where possible access to supervision from mental health professional.

Staff will receive training to raise awareness of Mental Health and Well-being topics. These will be from various organisations including Place2Be; The Mental Health Foundation; Young Minds and Anna Freud.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and well-being of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and well-being through team building activities. A separate Mental Health and Well-being Policy is available for staff.

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team, Governors, the SENCO and Mental Health Lead. this policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if deemed necessary.