



Leamington Federation
Sydenham Primary School and Lighthorne Heath
Emotional Well-being and Mental Health Policy

This policy is to be read in conjunction with:

- Inclusion and SEND Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Reducing Stress at Work Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Preventing Radicalisation Policy
- Staff Handbook and Behaviour Code of Conduct
- Online Safety Guidance
- Equality Policy / Equality Information and Objectives
- Home-School Agreement
- Attendance Policy
- Relationships and Health Education (RSHE) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

This policy reflects the principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation. At Sydenham and Lighthorne Heath Primary Schools, we recognise achievement in putting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of our practice to improve well-being and help all children realize their potential. Children's rights are learned. Taught, practiced, respected, protected and promoted in our schools.

- **To promote self-esteem and emotional wellbeing** - UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 37: Children must not suffer cruel or degrading treatment. They must be treated with care and respect.

Rationale

The Federation recognises that positive mental health and wellbeing are fundamental to pupils' safety, attendance, relationships, learning and achievement. We take a whole-school approach which combines a safe and inclusive culture, explicit teaching about mental wellbeing, early identification, timely support and effective partnership with families and external services. Staff are well placed to notice changes in pupils' presentation and behaviour, but do not diagnose mental health conditions; diagnosis is the role of appropriately qualified health professionals.

Statutory and national context

DfE/OHID Promoting Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing and DfE guidance on promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges.

DfE Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools guidance; and Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance, in force from September 2026;

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;

Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years;

Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty and the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils;

Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004;

Education Act 2002, including the duty to safeguard and promote pupils' welfare;

Across The Leamington Federation, we work towards positive emotional well-being and mental health for all the children and adults who make up our school communities.

Aims

By promoting emotional well-being and mental health, we aim to:

- Remove barriers to cognitive development and learning.
- Provide a safe and happy environment conducive to success so that everyone meets their potential.
- Involve parents/carers in school life and the progress of their children.
- Raise achievement and attainment.
- Promote resilience, self-esteem, emotional literacy, self-regulation and confidence in age-appropriate ways.
- Reduce stress and improve work-life balance.
- Improve morale and motivation.
- Support good attendance and engagement by identifying and reducing barriers linked to emotional wellbeing and mental health.

- Ensure pupils with SEND, disabilities or other barriers to learning and wellbeing benefit from high expectations, appropriate adaptations and meaningful participation in school life.

Leadership and Management

In the Leamington Federation, staff have collective responsibility for promoting emotional wellbeing and mental health. The Executive and Associate Head Teachers provide strategic leadership, supported by the SENDCo, Learning Mentor/pastoral staff and the Federation's Senior Mental Health Lead. The Senior Mental Health Lead oversees the whole-school approach, helps coordinate targeted support, works with the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) and other partners where appropriate, and supports staff development. The Governing Body provides strategic oversight and challenge.

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

Wellbeing is fundamental to cognitive development and learning. Mental wellbeing is taught explicitly through our planned PSHE and statutory Relationships and Health Education curriculum, alongside the Taking Care/Protective Behaviours approach, assemblies and wider curriculum opportunities. In line with the 2026 statutory guidance, pupils are supported to understand the relationship between physical and mental health, develop emotional awareness and self-regulation, recognise when things are not right, know how and where to seek help, and reduce stigma around mental health. Teaching is age-appropriate, inclusive and responsive to pupils' needs and experiences.

All pupils are taught an awareness of 'mindfulness' using 'Sixty Mindful Minutes' and 'Take a Break' resources. A growth mindset is also encouraged through the use of Learning Characters which develop the following dispositions:

- Resilience
- Perseverance
- Reflection
- Imagination
- Safe risk taking
- Cooperation
- Concentration

We promote a growth mindset, normalise mistakes as part of learning and explicitly teach pupils strategies for managing challenge and setbacks. Teaching maintains high expectations for all pupils while making timely adaptations to reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing. These may include predictable routines, visual timetables, Now and Next boards, reduced or chunked language, additional processing time, sensory or regulation supports, movement breaks, carefully planned adult support and access to a calm Regulation Station.

Well-being is further supported through the extended curriculum. Trips and after school clubs offer new experiences and build the soft skills necessary to be successful in life. In addition, the arts are valued as a means of promoting self-esteem, confidence and expression with regular opportunities available for pupils to

participate in music, theatre and visual arts. All pupils also work towards completing their “100 Things To Do Before You Leave Sydenham.”

Ethos and Environment

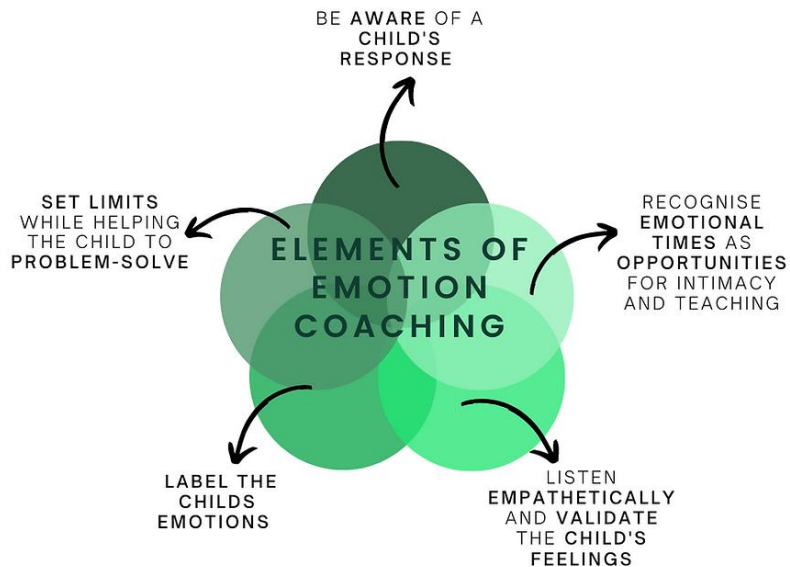
We have a nurturing, relational and trauma-informed ethos and see early identification and consistent support for children’s emotional wellbeing and mental health as part of our duty of care. Staff induction and ongoing professional development reinforce the importance of noticing changes, listening to pupils, responding with curiosity rather than judgement, and escalating concerns appropriately. Our approach is inclusive and anti-discriminatory and recognises that behaviour may communicate an unmet need, distress or a barrier to participation.

Staff take a holistic teaching approach that cares for the whole child in a safe and supportive classroom environment which is conducive to learning and is based upon mutual respect and positive relationships with clear rules, routines and expectations for behaviour. At all times, staff aim to promote within pupils the inner resources they need to thrive even in stressful circumstances and to develop the following protective factors in pupils:

- Secure attachment
- Good communication skills
- Problem solving skills and a positive attitude
- Experience of success and achievement
- Capacity to reflect
- Humour
- Opportunities to take up valued roles and responsibilities

Emotion Coaching

All school staff are trained in Emotion Coaching. Based on research by American Psychologist John Gottman, Emotion Coaching uses moments of heightened emotion and resulting behaviour to guide and teach the child and young person about more effective responses. Through empathetic engagement the child’s emotional state is verbally acknowledged and validated, promoting a sense of security and feeling ‘felt’. This activates changes in the child’s neurological system and allows the child to calm down, physiologically and psychologically. Inappropriate behaviours are not condoned in Emotion Coaching and when the child is calmer, incidents are discussed in a more rational and productive manner. Moves are made to problem solve and engage in solution-focused strategies.



Through repetitive, consistent and empathetic Emotion Coaching, the ability of a child to regulate their emotions is promoted.

Key Elements are involved in Emotion Coaching:

- Becoming aware of the child's emotions
- Recognising the emotion as an opportunity for attunement and teaching
- Listening empathetically, validating the child's feelings
- Helping the child find words to label the emotion
- Setting limits and explore strategies to solve the problem at hand.

Restorative Practice

We use restorative practice as a way of working with conflict. Restorative practice puts the focus on repairing the harm that has been done. It is an approach to conflict resolution that includes all of the parties involved. Restorative practice focuses on positive relationships and collaborative teaching and learning, with classrooms developing as communities. It means that teachers and pupils commit to looking at positive alternatives to reactive punitive behaviour solutions (e.g. suspensions and exclusions), because matters are dealt with in a clear and explicit way, understood and endorsed by all. Restorative practice is a proactive way of working *with* people, not doing things *to* them, not doing things *for* them and *not* being neglectful and doing nothing at all. Restorative practices seek to increase the opportunities for dialogue at every level. Where there may be conflict between children, staff will facilitate a restorative conversation:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have our thoughts been since?
- How do you feel about what happened?
- Who has been affected? In what way?
- How can we put this right?

Protective Behaviours

We are a Protective Behaviours school so use the principles and language outlined in the Taking Care Project. We encourage children to re-think their choices and teach them to recognise their feelings ('early warning signs') and to stop and think in order to decide what actions to take. Children are taught to be self-resilient and self-aware and are expected to ask themselves, "Is my fun, fun for everyone?" in relation to their behaviour choices. Staff provide unconditional care and support for all pupils in order to provide them with a safe and secure environment which supports good behaviour.

ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences)

We are a trauma-informed school. Staff understand that adverse childhood experiences, loss, trauma and chronic stress can affect development, relationships, emotional regulation, behaviour and readiness to learn. We avoid assuming that a particular experience will lead to a particular outcome and instead remain alert to individual presentation, protective factors and strengths. Staff use relational, predictable and emotionally attuned approaches to build safety, belonging and resilience, while referring safeguarding concerns in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Mental Health First Aiders

The Federation has staff trained in Mental Health First Aid. Their role is to notice signs that a child or adult may be experiencing mental health difficulty, listen non-judgementally, offer initial support and signpost or escalate appropriately. Mental Health First Aiders do not diagnose mental health conditions or replace qualified health professionals, the DSL team, emergency services or specialist mental health services.

- An in-depth understanding of mental health and the factors that can affect wellbeing
- Practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues
- Confidence to step in, reassure and support a person in distress
- Enhanced interpersonal skills such as non-judgemental listening
- Knowledge to help someone recover their health by guiding them to further support - whether that's self-help resources, through their employer, the NHS, or a mix

Attendance and emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA)

Where anxiety, emotional distress or mental health needs are contributing to absence or difficulty attending school, staff will work collaboratively with the pupil, parents/carers and relevant professionals to understand the barriers and agree a supportive plan. This may include a trusted adult, predictable routines, visual supports, a safe base, graded or phased reintegration, reasonable adjustments, carefully planned transitions and regular review. Support will be individualised and designed to increase belonging, participation and attendance without unnecessarily reinforcing avoidance.

Targeted Support and Referral

Some pupils may be more vulnerable to poor mental health because of individual, family, social or contextual factors. These factors do not predict poor mental health and should never be used to stereotype a child. Staff should be particularly alert to changes in presentation where pupils are experiencing, for example:

- young caring responsibilities;
 - current or previous involvement with mental health services;
 - parental or family mental ill-health, substance misuse or significant stress;
 - domestic abuse, bereavement, trauma, abuse, neglect or other adverse experiences;
- SEND, disability or communication needs;

being looked-after, previously looked-after or otherwise experiencing instability in care; bullying, discrimination, social isolation or identity-related stress; persistent or severe attendance difficulties, including EBSA; and significant transitions, family breakdown or other major life changes.

We aim to identify needs early and respond proportionately, using an assess–plan–do–review approach where appropriate. Staff share observations through CPOMS so that apparently small changes can contribute to a fuller picture over time. Targeted interventions are selected according to identified need, have clear aims and are reviewed for impact on wellbeing, participation, relationships, attendance and learning.

Depending on need and availability, targeted provision may include one-to-one “Bubble Time”, counselling, Drawing and Talking, Mental Health Support Team/education mental health practitioner support, nurture provision (including Saplings and Rainbows), shorter-term Sunshine groups, Therapeutic LEGO®/Brick-by-Brick programmes, Forest School, yoga/relaxation and other SEMH interventions. Support may be individual or small-group and is designed to complement, not replace, the pupil’s inclusion in high-quality classroom teaching and peer relationships. Where possible, interventions are planned so that pupils remain connected to their class and curriculum.

Mental health, safeguarding, confidentiality and information sharing

Any member of staff who is worried about a pupil’s emotional wellbeing or mental health must record the concern on CPOMS and follow the school’s safeguarding procedures. Mental health concerns can, in some circumstances, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff must not assume that a concern is “only mental health” where safeguarding may be relevant; the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be involved without delay where there is a safeguarding concern. Where a pupil discloses self-harm, suicidal thoughts, an intention or plan to harm themselves, or there is concern about immediate safety, staff must stay with the pupil, seek urgent support from a DSL/senior leader and follow safeguarding and emergency procedures. Emergency services should be contacted where there is an immediate risk to life or serious harm. Parents/carers will normally be informed unless doing so would place the child at greater risk; decisions about information sharing will be led by safeguarding principles and the DSL.

Staff should never promise a pupil absolute confidentiality. Information will be handled sensitively and shared on a need-to-know basis with those who can help keep the child safe and provide appropriate support, in accordance with KCSIE 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and data-protection law.

Pupil Voice

We recognise that involving pupils in decisions that affect them can strengthen belonging, agency and emotional wellbeing. Pupil views are sought through School Council, pupil wellbeing questionnaires, IEP/individual plan reviews, pupil conferencing and day-to-day conversations with trusted adults. Pupils receiving targeted support should, where developmentally appropriate, help identify what they find difficult, what helps and what outcomes matter to them.

Working with Parents/Carers

We understand that the family plays a key role in influencing children's emotional health and well-being and seek to engage with parents/carers as much as possible. Close ties with families are established at the very beginning of a child's school career. Staff are approachable and available at the start and end of the day for informal discussions with parents/carers. In addition, families are invited to Pupil Progress Review Meetings, IEP/ILP Review meetings and information sessions and are encouraged to attend PTA events, performances and themed learning events.

We aim to keep communication open, respectful and proportionate, using agreed school communication systems, newsletters and our websites. Where a pupil is receiving targeted support, parents/carers will normally be involved in planning and review, unless there is a safeguarding reason why this would not be appropriate.



Staff will support children, parents and carers to access appropriate NHS and local mental health support, including Coventry and Warwickshire RISE/CAMHS and the Mental Health Support Team (MHST), where appropriate. Referral routes and service names can change; staff should use current local guidance and consult the DSL, SENDCo, Senior Mental Health Lead or pastoral lead when deciding how best to seek support.

Staff Development, Health and Well-being

We provide ongoing professional development so that staff can promote wellbeing, recognise signs of distress or deterioration, understand the relationship between behaviour and mental health, respond appropriately to disclosures and know referral routes. Training may include safeguarding and KCSIE updates, Emotion Coaching, trauma-informed and attachment-aware practice, SEND/SEMH, suicide and self-harm awareness where appropriate, and learning provided through the Educational Psychology Service, The National College, Mental Health Support Team and nationally recognised specialist organisations.

The Federation recognises that staff wellbeing supports a safe, stable and effective school culture. Senior leaders seek to promote manageable working practices, supportive line management, access to occupational health/HR or other services where appropriate, and a culture in which staff can raise concerns about their own wellbeing confidentially. Staff are encouraged to seek help early and to make use of appropriate professional, NHS and employee-support resources.

This policy was ratified: **September 2026**

And will be reviewed: **September 2027**

Signed by the Head teacher:

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Juliette Westwood".

Chair of Governors: Richard Butler

Appendix: Useful Contacts

Department for Education – Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/promoting-and-supporting-mental-health-and-wellbeing-in-schools-and-colleges>

Department for Education – Mental health and behaviour in schools

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools-2>

PSHE Association – guidance and resources for teaching mental health and wellbeing

<https://pshe-association.org.uk/>

Anna Freud – mental health resources for schools, children and families

<https://www.annafreud.org/>

MindEd – free e-learning and information on children and young people’s mental health

<https://www.minded.org.uk/>

Place2Be – school-based mental health support and resources

<https://www.place2be.org.uk/>

YoungMinds – information and support for children, young people, parents and professionals

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

Childline – confidential support for children and young people (0800 1111)

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

NurtureUK – resources on nurture and relational approaches

<https://www.nurtureuk.org/>

Education Support – mental health and wellbeing support for education staff

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/>

Coventry and Warwickshire RISE/CAMHS – local children and young people’s mental health services

<https://www.covwarkpt.nhs.uk/children-and-young-people/>