



**Mental Health and Well-Being Policy**  
**Frieth School Vision statement**

*'...Your light must shine before people, so that they see the good things you do.'*

*Matthew 5:16*

**Values:**

These are the Christian Values that we believe are both taught and learnt in our school: responsibility, respect, honesty, creativity, kindness and resilience.

**Policy Statement:**

*Mental health is a state of well-being 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 her or his community. (World Health Organization)*

In our school our Christian vision and values shape all we do and are embedded into a Christian narrative chosen by the pupils, staff and governors. Our care, kindness, gentleness and responsibilities to each other are fundamental to our well-being and that of each individual member of our school and wider community.

In addition, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

**Scope:**

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental health and wellbeing overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and

- pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and wellbeing issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

### **Lead Members of Staff:**

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Mr Martin Gosling – Headteacher
- Mrs Krisztina Tyzack/ Mr Martin Gosling - Designated Child Protection / Safeguarding Officer
- Mrs Louise Goodchild - SENDCo
- Mrs Emma Spencer – ELSA
- Mrs Emma Spencer - Designated Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead (Staff and Pupils)
- Mrs Sarah Hunt - Mental Health and Wellbeing Governor
- Mr Martin Gosling - Pastoral
- Mr Martin Gosling - CPD
- Mrs Lorna Sparks - PSHE Lead

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Mental Health Lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Child Protection Office staff or the head teacher. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Mr Martin Gosling. Guidance about referring to CAMHS is available on Buckinghamshire Schoolsweb

### **Individual Care Plans:**

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receives a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions

- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

### **Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing:**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others. We will follow the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

### **Signposting:**

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. What support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined in Appendix A

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking by ensuring pupils understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen next

### **Warning Signs:**

School 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 communicate their concerns with Mr Martin Gosling and Emma Spencer

### **Possible warning signs 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 secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

### **Managing disclosures:**

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded in writing on a child welfare concern form and held on the pupil's confidential file. This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the mental health lead, Mrs Emma Spencer, who will provide store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

### **Confidentiality:**

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on then we should discuss with the pupil:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a pupil without first telling them. Ideally, we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent. Particularly if a pupil is in danger of

harm.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead Mrs Emma Spencer. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents should be informed if there are concerns about their mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the pupil should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection officers Mrs Krisztina Tyzack/ Mr Martin Gosling must be informed immediately.

## **Emotional Literacy Support (ELSA)**

### **Purpose of ELSA Support:**

The Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) provision at our school is designed to help children understand and manage their emotions, develop resilience, and build positive relationships. ELSA sessions provide a safe, structured space where pupils can explore feelings, learn coping strategies, and develop skills that support their overall wellbeing and readiness to learn.

ELSA support is an educational, school-based intervention and does not replace specialist therapeutic or clinical services.

### **Our ELSA Lead:**

Emma Spencer is our trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA). She plans and delivers all ELSA sessions, working closely with the SENCo, class teachers, and the Senior Leadership Team to ensure provision is high-quality, targeted, and responsive to pupil needs.

### **Types of ELSA Sessions:**

We offer both individual and small-group sessions:

#### **Individual Sessions:**

These sessions provide personalised support for children who may be experiencing:

- Emotional regulation difficulties
- Worries or anxiety
- Low self-esteem

- Bereavement or loss
- Friendship or social challenges
- Anger or frustration

### **Group Sessions:**

Group work focuses on shared skills and peer relationships, including:

- Social communication
- Turn-taking and cooperation
- Friendship building
- Problem-solving
- Transition support

### **Referral and Monitoring:**

- Referrals may be made by teachers, the SENCo, senior leaders, or parents/carers.
- Emma Spencer reviews referrals with the SENCo to prioritise need and capacity.
- Programmes typically run for a set number of weeks with clear aims.
- Progress is reviewed regularly, and strategies are shared with staff to support consistency in the classroom.

### **Partnership with Families:**

Strong communication between school and home helps children make the most of ELSA support. Parents and carers are encouraged to reinforce strategies at home, and staff work collaboratively to ensure children feel supported across all environments.

### **Working with Parents:**

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that

you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

### **Working with All Parents:**

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

### **Supporting Peers:**

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support
- Things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend help (e.g. signs of relapse)

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's

- condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

## **Training:**

Mrs Emma Spencer, Designated Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead (Staff and Pupils), has completed formal Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training. This training equips her with the knowledge and skills required to support the emotional wellbeing of both staff and pupils across the school.

MHFA training in schools focuses on:

- **Recognising early signs of mental health difficulties** Staff are trained to identify emerging concerns, changes in behaviour, or indicators that a pupil or colleague may be struggling.
- **Providing calm, safe, and supportive initial responses** The training emphasises how to listen non-judgementally, offer reassurance, and respond appropriately in the moment.
- **Guiding individuals towards appropriate professional help** MHFA-trained staff understand referral pathways and know when and how to escalate concerns to safeguarding leads, pastoral teams, or external services.
- **Promoting early intervention** The approach prioritises timely support to prevent escalation and to ensure individuals receive help as soon as possible.
- **Supporting a whole-school culture of wellbeing** MHFA contributes to creating an environment where mental health is openly discussed, stigma is reduced, and wellbeing is embedded into daily school life.

Mrs Spencer's role includes applying this training to strengthen the school's wellbeing provision, ensuring that staff and pupils feel supported, listened to, and guided towards the right help when needed.

All staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

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

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with Mr Martin Gosling our CPD Coordinator who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

## **Supporting Staff Wellbeing:**

Where concerns arise regarding a member of staff's mental health or stress levels, whether disclosed directly or observed, managers should refer to the *Buckinghamshire County Council: Mental Health at Work – A Guide for Managers*.

This guidance outlines:

- Procedures to follow when concerns are raised
- Expectations for supportive conversations
- Appropriate adjustments and ongoing monitoring
- Signposting to further sources of professional advice and support

Managers are expected to use this framework to ensure staff receive consistent, compassionate, and timely support.

## **Wellbeing Initiatives at Frieth:**

Frieth places a strong emphasis on nurturing a positive, connected, and supportive working environment. Our wellbeing initiatives include:

### **Annual Staff Wellbeing Day:**

All staff receive a dedicated wellbeing day each year. This protected time allows individuals to rest, recharge, and focus on personal wellbeing without work-related expectations.

### **Supportive Postcards:**

Staff are encouraged to write supportive postcards to colleagues, celebrating contributions, kindness, and moments that reflect our shared staff values. These postcards are collected and delivered weekly by the Headteacher, helping to foster a culture of appreciation, recognition, and mutual encouragement.

### **Policy Review:**

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to Mr Martin Gosling our mental health lead via phone 01494881554 or email [office@friethschool.co.uk](mailto:office@friethschool.co.uk)

This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.

Linked policies

- Child Protection
- Supporting pupils with Medical Needs
- PSHE policy

To be read alongside the Church of England and Children's society guidance document: *Mental Health and Well-being: towards a Whole School Approach*.

## Appendix A

### Useful Numbers

**These numbers may be of use to you or someone you know.**

#### First Response

**0845 4600001 or 01296 383962**

Referrals into social care if you are concerned for the safety or well-being of a child.

#### Social Care

**01296 382249**

This number takes you direct into social care to speak to the duty social worker should you not be able to make contact with your own social worker.

#### Family Support

**01296 398242**

Family Action works to tackle some of the most complex and difficult issues facing families today – including financial hardship, mental health problems, social isolation and learning disabilities. Domestic abuse, or substance misuse and alcohol problems.

#### Women's Aid

**01296 437777**

*Women's Aid* offer support to women & children/young people experiencing domestic violence.

#### Healthy Minds

**01865 901600 or txt 07798 667169**

***Healthy Minds*** is a NHS service offering quick and easy access to talking therapies, practical support and employment advice. Anyone who is feeling depressed, anxious or stressed, is aged 18 or over and has a GP in Buckinghamshire can request help from ***Healthy Minds***.

#### Barnardo's Buddies

**01296 330096**

Every young person who gets help from our CAMHS will have a trained Barnardo's buddy to work with them and offer support throughout their care.

**Bucks Youth**

**01296 431183**

For children and young people who are currently in care or leaving care and promote their right to be a part of the decision making processes that affect their lives.

**Young Carers**

**01280 817772**

Are independent charities offering young carers the chance to be young people free from their caring responsibilities through trusted activities, clubs, outings, holidays and one-to-one support.

**Citizen Advice**

**01296 3283317**

A service with knowledge and information for many concerns and problems.