



ALMOND HILL JUNIOR SCHOOL
GOVERNING BODY

MENTAL HEALTH AND
EMOTIONAL WELLBEING
POLICY

Full Governing Body	September 2025
Date for Review	September 2026

ALMOND HILL JUNIOR SCHOOL

Policy for Emotional Well Being and Mental Health

At Almond Hill Junior School, we want all of our pupils to 'Aim High' to achieve their academic potential and develop their talents and grow socially and emotionally into healthy children and citizens.

We want our children to be confident to grow as individuals who pursue their ambitions and experience the opportunities the wider world has to offer.

It is widely recognised that a child's emotional health and wellbeing influences their cognitive development and learning, as well as their physical and social health and their mental wellbeing in adulthood. The Department for Education recognises that, in order to help their pupils to succeed: schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy.

"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 2014)

Intent

At Almond Hill it is our *intent* to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff, pupils and wider community. We want our community to be able to work productively in order to thrive and achieve their potential in an environment where individuals feel confident to ask for and offer support. It is our intention to provide a community environment that is kind, caring and understanding and where it is OK not to be OK and know that.

At Almond Hill we want to

- Promote positive mental health in all staff, pupils and members of our community.
- Help members of our community feel good and experience positive emotions e.g. feeling happy/content.
- Promote positive relationships and social links.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health difficulties and alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health.
- Provide support to staff working with pupils with mental health issues.
- Provide support for pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and carers.
- Provide staff and children with tools and appropriate vocabulary to help support positive mental health.

This policy describes our school's approach to promoting positive mental health and well-being. This policy should be read in conjunction with our Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions policy in cases where a pupil's mental health overlaps or is linked to a medical issue and our SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need or disability.

Lead members of Staff:

All staff have responsibility to promote the mental health and well-being of pupils and members of our community.

Staff with specific responsibility:

Mrs E Fordham: Wellbeing Lead, Pupil Premium Lead, Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Children Looked After Lead and Designated Senior Lead (DSL)

Mrs S Birchall: SENCO, Deputy Designated Senior Lead

Miss R Porter : Mental Health Lead

Mrs G Burgess and Mrs Hannah Wright : Pastoral Lead, Deputy Designated Senior Lead

Mrs D Cawthorn: Lead First Aider

Miss L Andrews: PSHE Subject Lead

Well-being representatives*: Miss Standley, Miss Porter, Mrs Pridmore and Mrs Hanmore

*Representatives are subject to change.

Physical and mental wellbeing lead : Mrs Bond

If any member of staff is concerned about the mental health or well-being of a pupil, they should speak to the Head, Deputy Head or Mental Health lead. If there is a safeguarding concern, then normal child protection procedures will be followed as will procedures for a medical emergency alerting lead first aider and contacting emergency services as necessary.

Where referral to an external agency is appropriate this will be managed by the SENCO or Pastoral Lead.

Identification of Mental Ill Health

It is recognised that school staff are not trained medical professionals with qualifications to diagnose mental ill health. However, there may be signs that present which may indicate that a pupil or member of staff is experiencing mental health or emotional well-being issues. Warning signs will always be taken seriously and reported immediately to the Head /Deputy Head and/or Mental Health Lead.

Possible signs may include:

- Signs of physical harm that are repeated and appear non accidental
- Changes in behaviours/presentation/clothing
- Changes in activity/mood
- Changes in learning behaviour
- Talking about self-harm/suicide
- Secretive behaviour
- Lateness or absence
- Previous reference to pain or feeling unwell with no evident cause

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves to a peer or adult. In cases of disclosure a Cause for Concern form(handed to DSL/DDSL)/Note of concern(not urgent -bigger picture) should be completed and shared with the DSL/DDSLs immediately.

Individual Plans

An Individual Health Care Plan will be drawn up for pupils causing concern who receive a diagnosis relating to their mental health. This will be drawn up with parents/carers/ pupil and relevant medical professional with the mental health lead and Head teacher.

Plans will include: details of pupil's condition, specific requirements and precautions, medication and side effects, what to do/contact in emergency, general relevant information.

Teaching about mental health

Our PSHE curriculum supports the development of pupil skills and knowledge to keep themselves mentally safe and healthy. The curriculum structure of our PSHE curriculum will be adapted to meet the contextual needs of our school community and specific cohorts. Our curriculum is in line with the PSHE Association guidance and statutory RSE DfE requirements (from September 2020). These were implemented from January 2020. Our curriculum was revised again in 2024 to meet the needs of the children and will continue to be developed as DfE in 2025/26.

Signposting

We will ensure that our community is aware of recourses within school and the community. The Mental Health Lead (Rebecca Porter) holds reference materials that staff may access for further information.

The school has developed an area of our website to support this aim.

We will keep parents abreast of our policy development and invite them to take part in development and review

We will

- Invite parents to meet with relevant staff to discuss any support the school may be able to offer
- Signpost information to parents of who they can talk to
- Publish this policy on our website
- Offer regular drop-in sessions with sessions with SENCo and Pastoral Lead.

- Publish long term plans for PSHE and keep parents informed of the subject matter being taught in school so parents/carers can follow up at home

Overview of provision for mental health and well being

Whole School (wellbeing)	Curriculum School Policy	Pupil voice Government/School Council Pupil view/surveys Friendship Room/Playground PSHE lessons PE lessons Online e- Safety lessons Review of Attendance and Punctuality meetings (RAP) Well- being website page Mindfulness activities Resilience lessons Worry boxes Celebration assemblies
Whole school (mental health)	Curriculum School Policy Multi Agency links	PSHE lessons Outside agencies e.g. NSPCC workshop Early Help Module Therapeutic thinking Feeling of the week in assemblies
Individual (wellbeing)	School Policy Multi Agency One-page profile/Individual Education Plans IEPs/Education Health Care Plans EHCP Health Care Plan	Resilience Gardening Strength and difficulties questionnaire 'Miya time' General clubs support wellbeing My time Relaxation sessions
Individual (mental health)	Child in need / child protection Health Care Plans EHCP Health Care Plan	Protective Behaviours Educational Psychologist/ CAMHs/Step 2 /Nessie / Young Carer/DESTY Therapeutic plan/anxiety mapping/Roots and Fruits Drawing and talking ELSA Children's wellbeing practitioner (CWP)

Staff

At Almond Hill Junior School, we want to feel as adults as we aim for our children to feel - happy, motivated, confident, safe and listened to.

To achieve this, we will:

Promote staff mental health and well- being as an integral part of our whole school approach. This policy will form part of staff induction.

Recognise and support staff through times of difficulty (either in school or outside) and promote an environment for staff to raise concerns without fear of judgement.

Provide staff with the tools they need to support their mental health on the wellbeing display and through the flowchart (see appendix 1)

Foster a positive approach, good work life balance and coping strategies/resilience to meet children's needs in a caring and compassionate way and to be able to recognise their own needs and access support when required.

CPD for all staff yearly on positive mental health.

This may be seen in the following ways:

- Promoting a glass 'half full' attitude.
- Practising gratitude
- Being kind to one another – smiling, saying hello as we pass in the corridor. A short conversation can identify issues, alleviate worries and boost spirit.
- Self-ownership is promoted and all staff have received 'training' in this.
- Recognising work efforts - personal comment from senior leaders. Head report to Governors/Newsletters.
- Hold half termly 'well-being' working party meetings with representative from staff groups.
- Deadlines for teachers are attached to weekly staff meeting minutes.
- Weekly meetings are held to support effective communication.
- Staff are aware that they are not expected to respond to e-mails during evening/weekend/holidays . If the email is urgent, staff will be texted so they don't need to check their email continuously.
- The school has a staff 'WhatsApp' group for social communication and for year group teams too.
- There is a staff 'wellbeing board' in the staff room
- School 'Values'.
- Governors have agreed to authorise all members of staff one paid full day or 2 half day 'well-being' days (that total one day)during term time. This is offered to all staff after one full year of employment and for those on a permanent contract. These cannot be rolled over from one year to the next but may be allowed at Headteacher's discretion. Half days do not include the lunchtime for teaching assistants, it must be worked. Days should be booked one ½ term in advance and no days in July (Headteacher discretion). No more than 1 wellbeing day will be given in a week per group (i.e teachers, TAs, admin team) and these are given on a first come first served basis. Staff that work 2-3 days will be able book a half day including the lunchtime.
- Governor termly agenda item – referenced in external professional visits (e.g. HIP)
- SLT and governors are committed to staff wellbeing and are open to workable suggestions to improve this
- Teachers and SLT may have non-contact time at home when cover allows which is an opportunity for flexible working. This is subject to not interrupting the efficient running of the school.
- Leadership have been trialling all support staff to be offered the opportunity to take up to 1 week leave (**max 5 working days in total per year**) during term time. This should avoid 'important' weeks such as SATS week. This is reviewed annually.
Criteria to apply (2025/26):
 - Staff must discuss with the headteacher before making any bookings
 - Permanent contract and 2 full years employment
 - One day paid (wellbeing day) and 4 days unpaid (or Grafham days).
 - Can be taken once a year and on a first come first served basis.
 - The smooth and safe running of the school must be maintained at all times.
- Staff that attend residential trips and give up two days of their weekend (effectively working 2 weeks without a break) can have 2 paid days off in lieu. The same restrictions as for wellbeing days apply. If support staff take 5 days leave, this includes wellbeing and Grafham days (**5 days in total**)

All wellbeing days are honoured if they do not affect the effective running of the school. The leadership team will review the impact of the wellbeing/work life balance strategies regularly.

These wellbeing offers are non-contractual. This policy applies to all employees of the school. It does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

Where additional duties involve considerable extra work from home, directed time will be given back in lieu.

Monitoring

This policy will be referenced at staff well-being meetings and at termly governor meeting. The policy will be reviewed annually.

Appendix 1

