Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Our school helps us to walk with Jesus to be the best that we can be. Through God's love and guidance, we create an ethos of shared endeavour, friendship and co-operation to help us flourish academically, emotionally and spiritually.

"I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me."

Philippians 4:13

Policy Author	Miss Charlotte McCormack
Policy Date	September 2025
Approved by FGM	October 2025
Next Review	January 2027

Table of Contents

Policy statement	3
Scope	3
Lead Members of Staff	4
Individual Care Plans	4
Teaching Mental Health and Wellbeing	5
Signposting	5
Warning Signs	5
Managing Disclosures	6
Confidentiality	7
Working with Parents	7
Supporting Peers	8
Training	8
School Led Nurture Sessions	8
Counselling	9
Appendix 1 – CAMHS Referral Guidance	10
Appendix 2 – Useful Sources for Further Support	11

Equality Statement

At Baxenden St John's School, equality is a key principle for treating all people fairly and creating a society in which everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential - irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or any other recognised area of discrimination.

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)*

We aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff, pupils and families. 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. The policy will also inform parents and the wider community.

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 guidance to parents and staff with regard referrals for in-school counselling, and nurture support
- 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:

Mrs. J. Green - Designated Child Protection / Safeguarding Officer / Pastoral Lead / SENCO / CPD Lead
Miss. C. McCormack - MH and Emotional Wellbeing Lead / PSHE
Mrs. N. Baynes - Lead First Aider

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 Miss. C. McCormack, Mental Health Lead and/or Mrs. J. Green, SENDCO. Guidance about referring to CAMHS is provided in Appendix 1.

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive 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 and our SCARF scheme of work 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 the local community and nationally. What support is available within the local community and nationally, who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined in Appendix 2. What support is available within our school is outlined within the main body of this policy.

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 Miss. C. McCormack, our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead and/or Mrs. J. Green, SENDCO. 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, who is also the head teacher (Mrs. J Green).

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 secretively
- 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 and held on the pupil's confidential file (CPOMs). 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, Miss. C. McCormack and/or the DSL lead (head teacher), who will 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 Miss. C. McCormack or the DSL (head teacher); this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil. It also 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 the child's mental health and wellbeing and older pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, due to the age of the children, the DSL will still contact the parents to inform them of the pupil's wishes so that they are pre-prepared. With older children, 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 office Mrs. J. Green (head teacher) must be informed immediately so that they can take the appropriate actions.

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 to a phone call.

- 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 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. Early Help, 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 using our CPOMs system.

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 and in the weekly newsletter (where appropriate)
- 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 needs 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

As a minimum, 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.

We will host relevant information on our website for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more pupils.

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 Mrs. J. Green, our CPD Coordinator who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

School Led Wellbeing Intervention

What is wellbeing?
Wellbeing (noun) – the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy.

This is what the Oxford English Dictionary defines as wellbeing, but there is no short answer. What one person feels is their perfect state of wellbeing may be completely different from another person. This stands to reason as we all have different goals, ambitions and personalities.

At Baxenden, we run two intervention wellbeing groups led by trained staff – one for KS1 children and the other for KS2 children. We have a dedicated room called 'The Beehive' with comfortable seating and a wealth of resources and our own outdoor area called 'God's Garden', where wellbeing sessions can be held. Wellbeing sessions are child led and may take place as a small group or as a 1:1 session, depending on the focus of the wellbeing and the needs of the children.

Wellbeing sessions/ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support) at Baxenden consist of targeted intervention based on a balance of learning and teaching, affection and talking about emotions and feelings. The child led session could include activities such as group listening and speaking, learning and games, individual and shared playing and social skills. The groups run on positive reinforcement and praise. We endeavour to immerse our young people in an accepting and warm environment. This helps to develop positive relationships with both

teachers and peers by providing a variety of experiences, opportunities, approaches and resources to address children's individual needs within a culture of trust. At Baxenden, the wellbeing process works in the following way:

- The class teacher identifies children who they think would benefit from wellbeing/ELSA support and highlights these to Miss. C. McCormack, our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead for further discussion
- The class teacher then consults with parents to determine the reasons why they believe the child would benefit from the support, and when they will begin and how long the intervention will carry on for (usually half a term/6-week period). The child may need to be added to a 'waiting' list depending on demand.
- Once wellbeing has started, the wellbeing lead will feedback to the class teacher after their sessions so the child can be monitored.
- The teacher will contact the parents should they feel the need to share information from a wellbeing session to support the child or follow up at home
- Once a child has finished their period of wellbeing support, the teacher will feedback to the parents regarding the impact (but not necessarily the content of sessions).

Counselling

The school has access to a 1:1 counselling service, led by an outside agency - this is paid for by the school, who have the final decision which children will receive this service. Referral to the counsellor works in a similar way to our school nurture sessions (see paragraph above). However, usually parents will have approached the school to ask for access to the counsellor as a specialist service, which the school will consider.

- The class teacher identifies children who they think would benefit from the counsellor and highlights these to Miss. C. McCormack, our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead for further discussion.
- Due to a limited number of places available each term, children are selected according to their needs, after discussions with the mental health lead, class teacher, parents and headteacher. It is a 'needs-led' service, rather than a 'first come first served' basis.
- The counsellor will contact the parents at the start of their counselling period and at the end of their period (usually 8-10 weeks).
- Counselling sessions are confidential between the counsellor and the child, and feedback to the school and parents during the counselling period will only happen if there is a safeguarding issue.

Appendix 1 - Guidance about making a referral to CAMHS

https://www.lancashirecare.nhs.uk/CAMHS

A referral is when someone who works with your child, often a general practitioner (GP), teacher or social worker, has requested for your child to have an appointment with CAMHS. They should discuss a referral with you before it is made. Some clinics also accept self-referrals from young people or parents/carers.

CAMHS accept referrals from Doctors (including GP's and Paediatricians), Psychologists (Educational and Clinical), Social Workers and other professionals only via an open and active CAF/EHCP (only for children under 16 years).

Local CAMHS Team:

East Lancashire The Mount,
CAMHS,
East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust,
Whalley Road,
Accrington,
BB5 5DF.
Tel: 01254 226336/4
01772 538880 or email lcccamhs@lancashire.gov.uk

Appendix 2 - Useful sources of further support

Locally

Mental Health and Wellbeing Helpline: https://www.lancashirecare.nhs.uk/Mental-Health-Helpline 0800 915 4640

Lancashire Mind: http://www.lancashiremind.org.uk/ 0800 915 4640

NHS 111: Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust provides a Mental Health Access Line to support people's mental health needs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you, or someone you care for, is feeling unwell, you can access the line, by calling the NHS non-emergency services on 111.

Your GP: if you need urgent medical attention, ask your GP surgery for an emergency appointment.

999: call 999 when someone is very unwell and can not keep themselves safe, is being threatened or if a crime has been committed.

Accident and Emergency: if you, or someone you care for, is very unwell; injured or at risk of harm your nearest Accident and Emergency department can provide urgent care.

Social Services: If you feel your needs are urgent call Lancashire County Council Social Services on 0300 123 6720.

Advocacy in Lancashire: Call 033 000 222 00 for access to finding advocacy support with issues relating to health and social care.

Advocacy Focus: Advocacy Focus offer a free, local support service, available across Lancashire and Blackpool.

ICANN: Independent Community Advocacy Network North help provide a voice for anyone who is disadvantaged in some way, or for some reason.

Carers Lancashire: Carers Lancashire is a service that specialises in supporting carers and assessing their needs, call 0345 688 7133.

Nationally

Anxiety UK work to relieve and support those living with anxiety and anxiety-based depression by providing information, support and understanding via an extensive range of services, including 1:1 therapy. They can provide support and help if a person has been diagnosed with, or suspect they may have an anxiety condition and can also help them deal with specific phobias such as fear of spiders, blushing, vomiting, being alone, public speaking, heights – in fact, any fear that stops a person from getting on with their life. www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Charlie Waller Memorial Trust offers free resources, including guidance and policy templates for use by schools and colleges. www.cwmt.org.uk/

Child Bereavement UK supports families and educates professionals when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying, or when a child is facing bereavement. Every year they train more than 8,000 professionals, helping them to better understand and meet the needs of grieving families. https://childbereavementuk.org/

Childline is a free, private and confidential service for children and young people available online, on the phone, anytime facilitated by trained counsellors. The website is easy to navigate and has many interactive resources, advice and sources of support for children and young people. www.childline.org.uk/

Education Support Partnership is the UK's only charity providing mental health and wellbeing support services to all education staff and organisations. www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk/

Fixers: young people's stories Fixers are young people using their past to fix the future. They are motivated by personal experience to make positive change for themselves and those around them. Fixers have different backgrounds, interests and life experiences, and come from every corner of the UK. They are motivated by a desire to act on an issue that is important to them or a strong desire to help other people. They also have a voice that they want to be heard, whether that's on eating disorders, drugs, offending, cyberbullying or any other issue that is concerning them. Becoming a Fixer allows that to happen. Fixers are heard, understood and respected by others. Fixers choose the issue they want to fix and, using the skills of a team of creative experts, they work out how to make sure their message is heard by the right people, whether that's through a unique film, a leaflet or poster campaign, a website, an event or workshop. Then they use digital, print and broadcast media to make their voice heard as far and wide as possible. www.fixers.org.uk/home/news.php

Mental Health Access Pack is a compact, free resource which aims to: equip you with knowledge and advice, from medical, psychological and theological perspectives; help you support those in your community who are struggling with mental health issues;

help you to discuss issues and share ideas surrounding mental health and the church. www.mentalhealthaccesspack.org/

Mental Health Matters contains information and resources for parishes, dioceses, chaplaincies and church community groups - and anyone else who's interested - to help improve our work with people experiencing mental illness. The Church is well placed to make a significant difference in the area of mental health. We can be a force to end stigma, and we can also be a place of inclusion, welcome and ministry. Mental Health Matters is working to make mental wellbeing a priority in our churches today. www.mentalhealthmatters-cofe.org/

Mind provides trusted advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. They campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding. www.mind.org.uk/

MindEd: MindEd is a free educational resource on children and young people's mental health for all adults. www.minded.org.uk/

NHS Live Well Youth Mental Health offers resources and signposting for support from external links www.nhs.uk/Livewell/youth-mental-health/Pages/Youth-mental-health-help.aspx

Samaritans work to ensure that fewer people die by suicide by working to alleviate emotional distress and reduce the incidence of suicide feelings and suicidal behaviour. They offer 24 hours a day emotional support for people who are struggling to cope, including those who have had thoughts of suicide, as well as reaching out to high risk groups and communities to reduce the risk of suicide and working in partnership with other organisations, agencies and experts, influencing public policy and raising awareness of the challenges of reducing suicide. www.samaritans.org/

The Charlie Waller Memorial Trust provides funded training to schools on a variety of topics related to mental health including twilight, half day and full day INSET sessions. www.cwmt.org.uk/

The Children's Society is a national charity that works with the country's most vulnerable children and young people. We listen. We support. We act. Because no child should feel alone. They work directly with children, develop resources and publications and lobby on behalf of children annually, surveying them as part of their Good Childhood reports. www.childrenssociety.org.uk/

The Mind and Soul Foundation aims to educate – sharing the best of Christian theology and scientific advances; equip – helping people meet with God and recover from emotional distress; encourage – engaging with the local church and mental health services. Of more use to staff and parents, they have a good selection of resources and articles, including the mental health access pack which was developed for churches, offering information on common mental health conditions and pastoral tips for working with those with mental health conditions. www.mindandsoulfoundation.org/