

# E-ACT Mental Health and Well-Being Policy



## Document provenance

This policy was approved by:

Approver: Board of Trustees

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Executive Leadership Team (ELT) Owner:

National Director of Attendance, Behaviour  
and Safeguarding

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Feb 2026

*Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, this policy will be reviewed annually. Should no substantive changes be required at that point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.*

## Summary of policy:

This policy outlines how E-ACT Academies will work to promote the positive mental health and wellbeing of all pupils to enable them to flourish.

Academy Mental Health Lead is:....Kirsteen Craig.....

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## Introduction

This policy makes clear the academy’s commitment to supporting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of pupils and staff.

We recognise that children and young people’s mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. All children and young people move up and down the mental health continuum during their educational journey. However, some face significant life events which can seriously impact their emotional wellbeing and can include mental illness.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: “Schools have a role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children” (Mental [Health](#) and Behaviour in School, 2018). Schools can be a place for all pupils 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. Schools are also a place of respite from difficult home lives and offers, positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting the wellbeing of all young people.

The role of the academy is to ensure that pupils are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We have a role to ensure that pupils learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support. The academy takes the view that positive mental health is everybody’s business and that everyone has a role to play.

Each academy adopts a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing. It is schools that helps pupils to flourish, learn, and succeed by providing opportunities for them and the adults around them to develop coping skills and the resilience to manage the challenges that they are experiencing. The academy takes a graduated approach and effective response to meeting pupils’ needs (Appendix 1).

## Aims

- To ensure pupils feel valued

- To ensure pupils have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- To help pupils better understand their emotions and feelings.
- To help pupils feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries.
- To help pupils socially to form and maintain relationships.
- To promote self-esteem and ensure pupils know that they count.
- To encourage pupils to be confident and celebrate differences.
- To help pupils to develop emotional resilience and manage setbacks.
- To support the mission, vision and values of the trust and its establishments

## Legislation and guidance

This policy was written with regard to:

[The Equality Act 2010](#)

[The Data Protection Act 2018](#)

Articles 3 and 23 of the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

## Responsible for policy

The trust (E-ACT) has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory or trust framework. The trust has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy to the Headteacher of each academy. The senior leadership team within each academy has a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all members of staff are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.

## Key responsibilities

The academy has a responsibility to ensure that:

- The E-ACT values of thing big, show team spirit and doing the right thing are promoted, and a sense of belonging is encouraged
- Pupil voice is promoted, including opportunities for pupils to participate in decision-making
- Pupils have access to the appropriate support that meets their needs
- Academic and pastoral achievements are celebrated
- Pupils have opportunities to develop a sense of worth by ensuring they take responsibility for themselves and others
- Pupils have the opportunity to reflect on challenging situations
- There is a named Designated Lead for Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

## Lead members of staff

Although all members of staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, the following staff have a specific leadership role in this area:

- Headteacher
- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Senior Mental Health Lead
- Attendance Lead
- Personal Development Curriculum Lead
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCO)

## Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing

All pupils are taught about mental health and emotional well-being. The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by pupils to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe will be an integral part of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum. DfE guidance can be found [here](#).

The specific needs of pupils and their age is taken into consideration when delivering health education. The specific content of lessons will be determined by how old the pupils are and the specific needs of pupils to ensure the content is appropriate. The PSHE Association Guidance will be used to ensure that mental health and emotional wellbeing issues are taught in a safe and sensitive way.

## Identifying needs and warning signs

All staff will be trained in how to recognise warning signs of common mental health problems. The pastoral team will regularly assess all pupils using a variety of sources.

Staff may also 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.

Staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Senior Mental Health Lead as appropriate. It will be crucial for both leads to work together to ensure that the support offered to the pupil is holistic and that the recording of the support is robust and logged on CPOMs.

## Warning signs may include (not an exhaustive list):

- Changes in behaviour
- Changes in activity and mood
- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn

- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness, or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

## Mental health issues

### Self-harm

Self-harm refers to any behaviour in which a young person intentionally inflicts harm upon themselves as a means of coping with overwhelming thoughts, feelings, or experiences. Among adolescents, this behaviour most commonly manifests as cutting, burning, or non-lethal overdoses. In contrast, younger children and those with special needs are more likely to engage in behaviours such as picking or scratching at wounds, pulling out their hair, or causing bruises through banging or other means.

### Anxiety, panic attacks and phobias

Anxiety, panic attacks, and phobias can manifest in various forms among children and young people. While it is normal for everyone to experience low levels of anxiety as part of everyday life, persistent thoughts of anxiety, fear, or panic over several weeks or months, especially when they begin to interfere with a young person's ability to engage in or enjoy daily activities, requires intervention.

### Depression

While fluctuations in mood are a normal aspect of life, individuals suffering from depression may experience these highs and lows more intensely. Persistent feelings of failure, hopelessness, numbness, or sadness can permeate their daily lives over weeks or months, significantly affecting their behaviour, as well as their ability and motivation to participate in everyday activities.

### Obsessions and compulsions

Obsessions refer to intrusive and distressing thoughts or feelings that disrupt an individual's mental state. Compulsions are the behaviours performed to alleviate these thoughts or feelings. For instance, a young person might constantly fear that their house will burn down if they do not turn off all switches before leaving. In response, they may repeatedly check the switches, even returning home multiple times to ensure they are off. Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) can manifest in various ways and is not limited to cleaning and checking behaviours.

### Eating problems

Food, weight, and body shape can serve as mechanisms for coping with or expressing challenging thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that young people encounter daily. Some may develop eating disorders such as anorexia (characterised by restricted food intake), binge eating

disorder, or bulimia nervosa (marked by cycles of bingeing and purging). Additionally, younger children, particularly those in primary or preschool age, may exhibit problematic behaviours around food, such as refusing to eat in specific situations or with certain individuals. These behaviours can be a means of conveying messages that the child lacks the verbal ability to express.

### Suicidal feelings

Young people may experience complicated thoughts and feelings about wanting to end their own lives. Some young people never act on these feelings though they may openly discuss and explore them, while other young people die suddenly from suicide apparently unexpectedly.

### Managing Disclosures

If a pupil makes a disclosure about themselves or a peer to a member of staff, staff will remain calm, non-judgmental and reassuring.

Staff will focus on the pupil's emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to find out why they are feeling that way or offering advice.

If a pupil makes a disclosure, staff must follow the academy's safeguarding 'reporting a disclosure' procedure and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead. All disclosures are recorded and stored in the pupil's confidential child protection file on CPOMS.

When making a record of a disclosure, staff will include:

- The full name of the member of staff who is making the record
- The full name of the pupil(s) involved
- The date, time and location of the disclosure
- The context in which the disclosure was made
- Any questions asked or support offered by the member of staff

The academy's safeguarding procedures will then be followed robustly to ensure the pupil is supported and safe.

### Targeted support

The academy will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate. Support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils may include (not an exhaustive list):

- The targeted use of specific resources such as a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP)
- Strengths and difficulties questionnaires
- Mood diaries
- 1:1 mentoring or counselling
- Bereavement support

- Group activities
- Therapeutic activities including art, Lego, relaxation, and mindfulness techniques
- Boxall profiling
- Early Help assessments

## Pupil Support Plans and Health Care Plans

Personal Support Plans are put in place for all pupils receiving targeted support for mental health and emotional wellbeing. These are created by the Senior Mental Health Lead together with the most appropriate leads listed above in this policy. Where PSPs are needed for SEND pupils, the SENCO will always be involved.

Both the plan and support will be recorded on CPOMs and progress will be monitored.

All pupils who receive a formal diagnosis pertaining to their mental health will have a Health Care Plan (HCP). This will be drawn up with the pupil, parents/carers or guardians and the relevant health professionals. Plans will be reviewed on a regular basis and updated.

## Working in partnership with parents/carers

To support parents/carers, the academy will:

- Ensure that all parents/carers are aware of a key contact in school who they can talk to and share any concerns about their child
- Make the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy easily accessible to parents/carers
- Share ideas about how parents/carers can support positive mental health at home with their child or children.
- Keep parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their child or children are learning about in school and share ideas for extending and exploring them learning at home.
- Signpost parents/carers to external agencies who can provide additional mental health support.

## Signposting

Referrals to external support services will be undertaken in collaboration with parents/carers where appropriate.

Leaders will ensure that staff, pupils, and parents/carers are aware of what support is available within school and how to access further support.

Leaders will share information via various methods of communication including the academy website and appropriate social media accounts.



## Working with external agencies and partners

As part of the targeted provision, the academy will work with other agencies to support pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing including:

- The school nurse service
- Mental health support teams
- Educational psychology services
- Behaviour support
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Social Care

## Training

Through regular child protection training, all staff will receive emotional wellbeing training and will be able to recognise and respond to mental health issues to keep pupils safe.

Training opportunities for staff requiring more in-depth knowledge will be evaluated during the performance appraisal process. Furthermore, additional Continuing Professional Development (CPD) will be supported throughout the year as necessary, in response to evolving situations involving one or more pupils.

## Success factors

Success will be measured in following ways:

- All staff will know and understand their responsibility within the whole-school approach to mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- All staff will have confidence in their own skills when dealing with pupils' emotional issues.
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing will be seen as critical to everyone's success within the school.
- Pupils will have a language of resilience and mental health and wellbeing
- Pupils will be supported appropriately and in a timely manner
- Parents and carers will be aware of the roles and support available within the school.

## Useful websites

The following websites provide online guidance and support:

- Anxiety UK: [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

- OCD UK: [www.ocduk.org](http://www.ocduk.org)
- Depression Alliance: [www.depressoinalliance.org](http://www.depressoinalliance.org)
- Eating Disorders: [www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk) and [www.inourhands.com](http://www.inourhands.com)
- National Self-Harm Network: [www.nshn.co.uk](http://www.nshn.co.uk) [www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk)
- Suicidal thoughts Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: [www.papyrusuk.org](http://www.papyrusuk.org)
- [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) champions young people’s mental health and wellbeing
- [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) advice and support on mental health problems
- [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk) (e-learning)
- [www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk) tackles the stigma of mental health
- [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org) challenges attitudes towards mental health

### Links to other school policies

This policy is linked to the following policies:

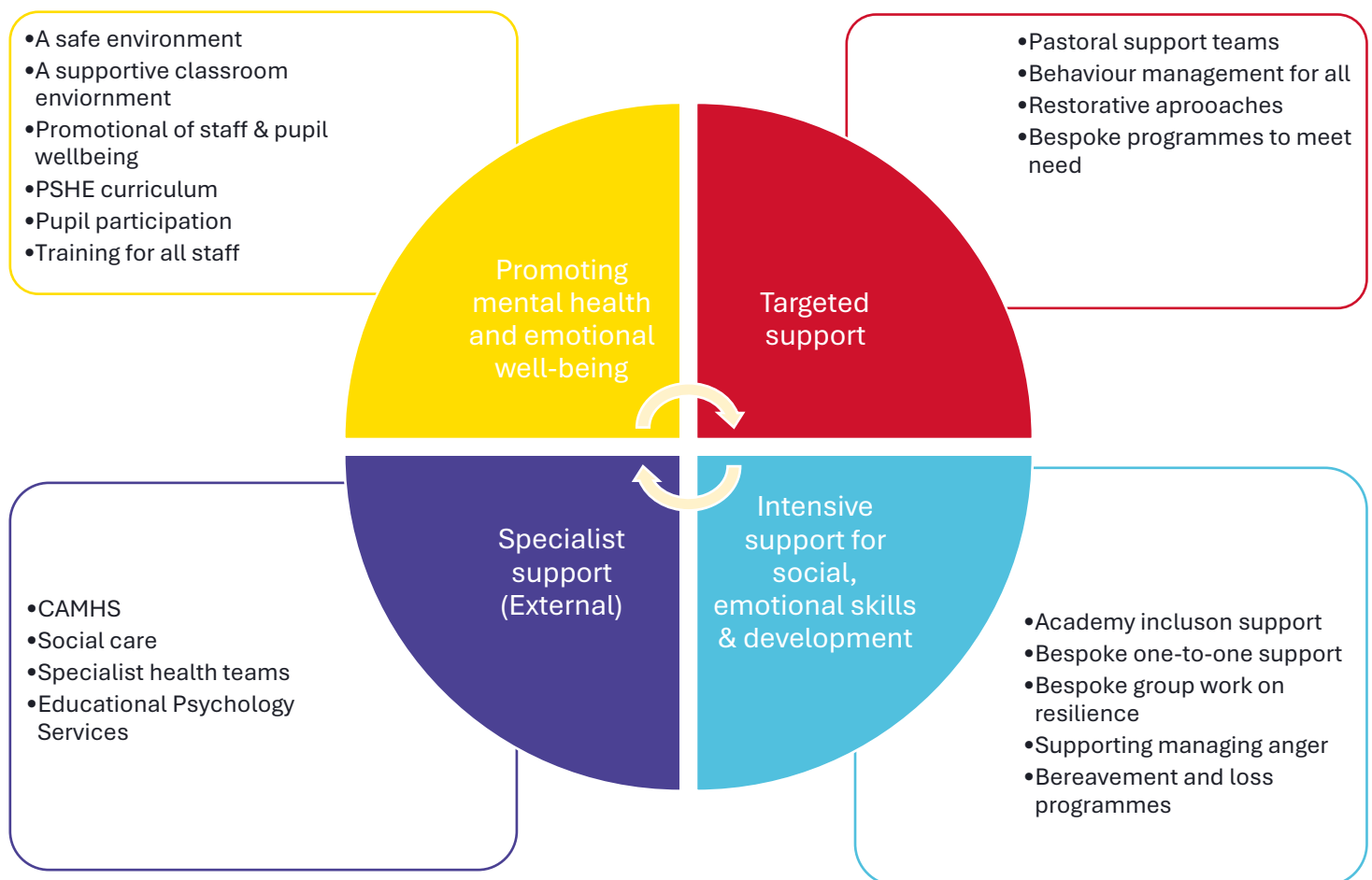
- Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Relationship and Health Education (RHE) Policy – Primary
- Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy – Secondary
- Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Learning Policy
- Medical Needs Policy

### Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Board of Trustees.

## Appendix 1: Whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing.

The diagram below highlights a graduated and effective response to meeting pupils' needs:



## Appendix 2: Academy Specific Arrangements

Whole school approach to promoting mental health awareness

1) Mental health is taught in PSHE

The Dolphin School's PSHE curriculum is built around our children's needs, our community context and the National Curriculum objectives. We incorporate resources and lesson activities from "The Jigsaw Programme" in to our teaching and learning.

Through this, we deliver a comprehensive, carefully thought-through scheme of work which brings consistency and progression to our children's learning in this vital curriculum area. We constantly look to our community to ensure we listen and work together to co-construct an broad and balanced PSHE curriculum. This means we are regularly reflecting on our approach and adapt it where necessary to ensure that we building on children's prior knowledge and link PSHE to our enquiries as well as to learning across our school curriculum and school values.

We cover all areas of PSHE for the primary phase including statutory Relationships and Health Education.

We follow the [PSHE Association Guidance teaching mental health and emotional wellbeing](#).

Pupils are taught to:

- Develop healthy coping strategies
- Challenge misconceptions around mental health
- Understand their own emotional state
- Keep themselves safe

For more information, see our PSHE curriculum ([PSHE - Subjects - The Dolphin School Bristol](#)).

## **2) Creating a positive atmosphere around mental health**

Staff will create an open culture around mental health by:

- Discussing mental health with pupils in order to break down stigma
- Encouraging pupils to disclose when their mental health is deteriorating

## **3) Baseline support for all pupils**

As part of our school's commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all pupils, our school offers support to all pupils by:

- Raising awareness of mental health during assemblies and PSHE
- NSPCC workshops
- Signposting all pupils to sources of online support on our school website
- Having open discussions about mental health during lessons
- Providing pupils with avenues to provide feedback on any elements of our school that is negatively impacting their mental health using class assembly time and worry books
- Monitoring pupils' mental health through assessments, e.g. a strengths and difficulties questionnaire
- Appointing a senior mental health lead with a strategic oversight of our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing

- Offering pastoral support through our Pastoral Manager

Making classrooms a safe space to discuss mental health and wellbeing through interventions such as:

Worry boxes

Circle time