



# **Holmer Green Senior School**

## **Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy**

February 2026

This policy was written in consultation with staff, pupils, parents and professionals involved in mental health and wellbeing.

### **Policy Statement**

At Holmer Green Senior School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils. We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued. At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

At our School we:

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
- help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- help children socially to form and maintain relationships
- promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count
- encourage children to be confident and 'dare to be different'
- help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Providing opportunities to reflect
- Access to appropriate support that meets their needs

We pursue our aims through:

- Universal, whole school approaches
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement
- The Bridge
- Use of school counsellor
- Outside agencies to support with their mental health conversations

### **Scope**

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Medical policy and our SEND policy in cases where pupils mental health needs overlap with these. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for Behaviour for Learning and Anti-Bullying policies. It should also sit alongside child protection procedures.

### **This policy is informed by:**

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education statutory guidance (2026)
- DfE guidance: Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges
- DfE guidance: Mental health and behaviour in schools

### **Lead Members of Staff**

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

- Emily Reed – Designated Safeguarding Lead and Mental Health Lead
- Laura Foster –Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- John Smith- Pastoral Manager

- Charlotte Hemmingway-Pastoral Manager

The Mental Health Lead is responsible for:

- Strategic oversight of the school's mental health provision
- Leading staff training and development in mental health awareness
- Monitoring trends in student wellbeing through CPOMS data analysis
- Coordinating with external agencies (CAMHS, school nurse, etc.)
- Supporting staff who are working with students with mental health needs
- Keeping up to date with best practice and emerging research

### **Teaching about Mental Health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE and Pupil Resilience Program curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

Teaching is aligned with [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) and the [RSHE statutory guidance \(September 2026\)](#), which places mental health and wellbeing at the core of the curriculum. Students cover this in PSHCE curriculum in the following units:

- Year 7-Health and wellbeing Autumn half term 1
- Year 8-Health and wellbeing Autumn half term 1
- Year 9-Health and wellbeing Autumn half term 1
- Year 10-Health and wellbeing Autumn half term 1
- Year 11-Health and wellbeing Autumn half term 1

We recognise that some pupils with SEND may be more vulnerable to mental-health challenges and ensures teaching reflects this. Mental health education is adapted to ensure accessibility for all learners via the following methods:

- differentiated resources and visual supports to aid understanding
- small-group or individualised sessions for pupils who need additional reinforcement
- collaboration with the SEND team to ensure content is appropriate to cognitive, communication, or sensory needs
- use of clear, concrete language and repetition to support comprehension

### **Online Safety and Mental Health**

Teaching includes explicit links between digital life and wellbeing, covering: impacts of social media on self-esteem and body image cyberbullying and digital harassment managing screen time and digital boundaries recognising online risks and knowing how to seek help

### **Targeted/Peer Support**

All referrals for support can be made through the pastoral team. Referrals are logged on CPOMS and managed through the graduated response. The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- **The Bridge/Nurture Group:** Small-group support for students who need additional help with emotional regulation, social skills, or re-engagement with learning.
- **SUSU Group:** Stand Up Speak Up is a student voice leadership group.
- **MIND Mentors:** Trained peer mentors who provide listening support and signposting
- **DEI Prefects:** Student leaders who champion and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, and support peers experiencing discrimination or identity-related distress
- **Counselling:** One-to-one therapeutic support provided by a qualified school counsellor
- **Therapeutic Activities:** Including art therapy, mindfulness, and relaxation techniques

- **Sensory Room:** A calm, safe space for students to regulate emotions and reduce anxiety

Students interested in becoming peer supporters can speak to their head of year.

### **Signposting**

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

Students will have access to signposting on the school websites, in toilets and around school.

### **Identifying needs and Warning Signs**

Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation. It is important the school's response to persistently absent pupils supports identifying such abuse. [Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

All staff will notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead using the safeguarding software (CPOMS) if they have seen a change in a student's:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical appearance
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues.

Possible warning signs include:

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

These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns via CPOMS. **The school follows a graduated, child-centred safeguarding response.** All concerns logged on CPOMS are reviewed by the DSL within 24 hours and responded to proportionately through universal, targeted, or specialist interventions, ensuring timely protection and support for all pupils.

### **Responding to a Mental Health Crisis**

If a student is in immediate distress or at risk of harm to themselves or others, staff should:

- Stay with the student and ensure they are safe
- Contact a member of the pastoral team or DSL immediately
- Call 999 if there is an immediate risk to life
- Log the incident on CPOMS as soon as it is safe to do so

**The DSL will:**

- Assess the level of risk and take appropriate action
- Contact parents/carers (unless this would increase risk)
- Liaise with external agencies (e.g., CAMHS crisis team, emergency services)
- Arrange appropriate support and follow-up

**Working with Parents**

In order to support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website
- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g. through parent forums.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their child.
- Make our Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.
- 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.
- A parent website that shares the links with parents of useful articles relating to children of a relevant age

**Confidentiality**

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. Staff cannot offer confidentiality and must always refer to the appropriate person in school.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the mental health lead, this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the student, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the student and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents will normally be informed when a student discloses a mental health concern to a member of staff. However, if there are underlying child protection issues, or if informing parents would put the child at greater risk, the DSL will make decisions about informing parents on a case-by-case basis. Safeguarding concerns always take precedence.

Students may choose to tell their parents themselves, if this is the case, the student should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give students the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

**Working with other agencies and partners**

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- The school nurse
- Educational psychology services
- Behaviour support (YOS)
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Therapists

**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 students safe.

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 to developing situations with one or more pupils.

### **Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing**

The school recognises that staff wellbeing is essential to creating a supportive environment for students. We are committed to creating the right culture and environment so that staff feel comfortable discussing matters both within and outside of the workplace (including online) which may have implications for the safeguarding of children.

#### **To support staff mental health, we:**

- Provide access to confidential Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) [add provider name if applicable]
- Offer regular supervision and debriefing for staff dealing with complex safeguarding or mental health cases
- Ensure workload and wellbeing are discussed during performance management
- Promote a culture where staff can speak openly about mental health without stigma
- Signpost to occupational health services and external support
- Provide mental health awareness training for all staff

#### **Staff can access support through:**

- Line managers
- Senior Leadership Team
- Occupational Health –Milton Kynes occupational health
- Employee Assistance Programme-Health Assured

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The school is committed to ensuring that its mental-health provision is impactful, evidence-informed, and responsive to the needs of students, staff, and families. Effectiveness will be monitored through a combination of quantitative data, qualitative feedback, and regular governance oversight. This is achieved through

- Regular half termly review of CPOMS data to identify emerging trends, patterns of concern, and the effectiveness of interventions.
- Analysis of referral pathways to ensure timely support and appropriate escalation where needed.
- Student feedback gathered through surveys, focus groups, and wellbeing check-ins to understand lived experiences and perceived impact.
- Parent and carer feedback collected through surveys, meetings, and informal conversations to evaluate communication, support, and confidence in the school's approach.
- Termly reporting to governors through safeguarding and wellbeing sections of Headteachers report ensuring oversight, challenge, and strategic direction.

### **Support for families and students**

Here you can find a list of organisations providing expert advice, a listening ear and Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Policy

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resources for managing distress.

- **Mental health helplines and charities**

**Samaritans.** Samaritans provide 24-hour online and phone support to people in distress. Call: 116 123.

**Mind.** Mind is a charity that provides advice and support for people experiencing a mental health problem in England and Wales. Call: 0300 123 3393 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 6pm)

**Rethink Mental Illness.** Support and advice for people living with mental health problems. Call: 0300 5000 927 (Mon to Fri, 9.30am to 4pm)

**SANE.** National out-of hours mental health charity offering emotional support, guidance and information. Call: 0300 304 7000 (4.30pm to 10.30pm)

**Mental Health Foundation.** Information and support for anyone with mental health problems or learning disabilities.

- **Hearing voices & peer support**

**Voice Collective.** Support and information for children and young people who hear, see or sense things that others don't.

**Hearing Voices Network.** Support and information for people who hear voices, see visions, or have other unusual experiences.

- **Children and adolescents**

**Childline.** Support for people under 19 in the UK. Call: 0800 11 11

**Young Minds.** Child and adolescent mental health charity. Call: 0808 802 5544 (parents' helpline)

- **Suicide prevention**

**CALM** (Campaign Against Living Miserably). Charity dedicated to preventing male suicide. Call: 0800 58 58 58 (nationwide)

**Papyrus Hopeline UK.** Confidential support for young people struggling with suicidal thoughts. Call: 0800 068 41 41

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