



HILDENBOROUGH CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," (Philippians 4:13) so that I can be the best that I can be, for myself, for others and for God.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

September 2025

We aspire for our community to flourish as we journey together to fulfil our God given potential by encouraging a delight in the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge. We cherish each person as unique and special, and celebrate God's creation through providing rich experiences, which enlighten, challenge, shape and enhance life's opportunities for all.

Last Reviewed	September 2025
Next Review Date	September 2026
Ratified by	FGB
Ratified on	15.10.25
Lead Person	Rachel Forward

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” (Philippians 4:13) so that I can be the best that I can be, for myself, for others and for God.

What is this policy?

A school’s mental health policy explains and sets out the school’s commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for the whole community (children, staff, parents and carers). It should outline how the school will support its pupils and staff, its ongoing commitment to training, and how it will work with the wider community to promote positive wellbeing for all. It should include and have regard for Statutory guidance including ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ (KCSIE 2025) and ‘Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education’ 2019.

Why the need for a Mental Health policy?

The Government’s Transforming Children and Young People’s Mental Health Provision Green Paper (Department of Health, Department of Education 2017) included a focus on early intervention and prevention and the central role of schools. A key theme is that there will be incentives for every school to identify a Designated Senior Lead for Mental Health to oversee the approach to mental health and wellbeing. Rachel Forward has been appointed as the Designated Senior Lead for Mental Health at Hildenborough CE Primary School and successfully completed the training for this role in October 2024.

Young Minds charity reports that **one in six children aged 5 to 16** are identified as having a probable mental health problem. That translates to roughly **five children in every classroom**.

Mental health issues can affect a pupil’s emotional wellbeing as well as their educational attainment. Developing a Mental Health Policy is a starting point in establishing a whole school approach that not only addresses pupil mental health but also shows pupils and their parents that the school is committed to the wellbeing and mental health of the pupils. Additionally, it signals to pupils that the school is understanding of mental health issues and encourages them to come forward with their difficulties. A mentally healthy school is one that has a whole-school approach to the topic of mental health and sees the mental health of its pupils, staff, and parents as everybody’s responsibility.

How will this policy be communicated?

This policy can only impact upon practice if it is a (regularly updated) living document. It must be accessible to and understood by all stakeholders. It will be communicated in the following ways:

- Posted on the school website
- Available on the internal staff network/drive
- Part of school induction pack for all new staff (including temporary, supply and non-classroom-based staff)
- Integral to safeguarding updates and training for all staff (especially in September refreshers)
- Reviews of this policy will include input from staff, pupils and other stakeholders, helping to ensure further engagement

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” (Philippians 4:13) so that I can be the best that I can be, for myself, for others and for God.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy Hildenborough Church of England Primary School

1. Policy Statement

At Hildenborough CE Primary School, we are committed to promoting and nurturing a positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body, their families and governors. We pursue this aim using universal, whole school approaches and specialised targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils and through the use of effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues. We know that everyone experiences life challenges that 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. Our aim is to be a school where:

- **All members of our school community feel valued.** *We will provide an environment where the voice of every individual is heard and they feel listened to.*
- **Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe.** *We will provide the children with a secure foundation from which to flourish, supporting them to become resilient learners and adopt a growth mindset.*
- **Children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma.** *We will promote the value of recognising and expressing our feelings. We aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of mental health issues to reduce the stigma that is associated with mental health difficulties.*
- **Positive mental health and wellbeing for all is promoted and valued.** *Our ethos, policies and behaviours support mental health and resilience, which everyone understands. We will train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent or address mental health problems.*
- **We identify and support children, their families and staff with mental health needs.** *We value early identification of children who have mental health needs and plan support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services. We will encourage pupils, staff and parents to seek help when needed, so that all within the school community feel happy and healthy.*
- **Positive relationships between all members of the school community are promoted.** *We will promote positive interactions/relationships between all pupils, staff and parents, offering support and intervention when needed.*
- **Bullying is not tolerated.** *We will promote our Christian values of Love, Compassion, Courage, Endurance, Hope and Honesty.*

These aims are underpinned by The Six Principles of Nurture, which are well-embedded at Hildenborough School and inform our nurturing practice.

Principle 1: My learning is personalised to me.

Principle 2: Our school is a safe place to be.

Principle 3: My wellbeing matters.

Love. Compassion. Courage. Endurance. Hope. Honesty

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” (Philippians 4:13) so that I can be the best that I can be, for myself, for others and for God.

Principle 4: My voice is valued.

Principle 5: My behaviour shows how I am feeling.

Principle 6: I can cope with changes in my life.

2. Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in our school community, including pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health and wellbeing issues.
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health.
- Provide the right support to pupils with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SLT that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff and pupil welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms.

3. Staff Roles and Responsibilities

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

- Rachel Forward – Designated Mental Health Lead/ Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Caroline Stone – Deputy Mental Health Lead/ Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Ruth Ardrey – Deputy Mental Health Lead/ Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Emma Welch – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

School staff could become aware of changes in behaviour which may indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These changes may include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or 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
- 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

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” (Philippians 4:13) so that I can be the best that I can be, for myself, for others and for God.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to Rachel Forward and/or Caroline Stone in the first instance. They must also record their concern on CPOMS. If there is a concern that the student is in danger of immediate harm, the school’s safeguarding procedures should be followed.

4. Supporting Pupil Mental Health and Wellbeing

At Hildenborough CE Primary School, we offer different levels of support (see appendix A):

Tier 1: Universal Support

- To meet the needs of all our pupils through our overall nurturing ethos (see appendix B for more information relating to the National Nurturing Schools Award) and our wider curriculum. For instance, developing resilience for all.

Tier 2: Additional support (wellbeing prescriptions)

- For pupils who may have short-term needs and those who may have been made vulnerable by life experiences, such as bereavement.

Tier 3: Targeted support

- For pupils who need more differentiated support and resources or specific targeted interventions, such as Therapeutic Play / Talk-Time sessions.

Tier 4: Referrals to outside agencies

- For pupils who continue to need specialist support, outside the remit of that the school can offer, such as referrals to Kent Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CYPMHS). Rachel Forward and Caroline Stone are responsible for making these referrals.

All mental health and wellbeing interventions will be discussed with parents and consent agreed before being delivered to pupils.

When a pupil has been identified as having significant cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CYPMHS or another organisation, it is recommended that an Individual Care Plan should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals.

5. Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our children to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy are included as part of our PSHE curriculum and embedded throughout our school learning community in line with the [DfE RSE guidance](#).

By the end of Primary School pupils should know:

- that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health.

Love. Compassion. Courage. Endurance. Hope. Honesty

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” (Philippians 4:13) so that I can be the best that I can be, for myself, for others and for God.

- that there is a normal range of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) and scale of emotions that all humans experience in relation to different experiences and situations.
- how to recognise and talk about their emotions, including having a varied vocabulary of words to use when talking about their own and others’ feelings.
- how to judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate.
- the benefits of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation, voluntary and service-based activity on mental wellbeing and happiness.
- simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest, time spent with friends and family and the benefits of hobbies and interests.
- isolation and loneliness can affect children and that it is very important for them to discuss their feelings with an adult and seek support.
- that bullying (including cyberbullying) has a negative and often lasting impact on mental wellbeing.
- where and how to seek support (including recognising the triggers for seeking support), including whom in school they should speak to if they are worried about their own or someone else’s mental wellbeing or ability to control their emotions (including issues arising online).
- it is common for people to experience mental ill health. For many people who do, the problems can be resolved if the right support is made available, especially if accessed early enough.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of each cohort 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. Lessons will also be supported by assemblies and enrichment activities throughout the year.

6. Managing Disclosures

At times, a pupil may choose to tell a staff member concerns that they have about their own emotions or wellbeing. All staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. They should respond in a calm, supportive and non-judgemental way, listen rather than advise, and their first thoughts should be of the student’s emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring ‘why?’ All disclosures should be recorded on CPOMS and shared with Ruth Ardrey, Emma Welch, Rachel Forward and Caroline Stone, who will offer support and advice about next steps.

6.1 Confidentiality

Staff must be honest with pupils with regards to the issue of confidentiality. They should never promise the child that they will keep this to themselves, and should inform the pupil who they are going to talk to, what they are going to tell them and why it is important that they pass these concerns on.

6.2 Informing Parents/Carers

Love. Compassion. Courage. Endurance. Hope. Honesty

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” (Philippians 4:13) so that I can be the best that I can be, for myself, for others and for God.

Parents will usually be informed if a child makes a disclosure and staff need to be sensitive when sharing this with parents/carers. It can be upsetting for parents to learn of their child’s issues and staff should give the parent/carer time to reflect. A brief record of the meeting should be recorded on CPOMS. Staff should always highlight further sources of information where possible to offer support to the parent.

However, if a child gives reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents may not be informed and Ruth Ardrey (Designated Safeguarding Lead) should be informed immediately so that a referral can be made.

7. Working with Parent/Carers and the School Community

We recognise that family plays an important role in influencing children and young people’s emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring that all parents are aware of who to talk to if they have any concerns about their child’s mental health and wellbeing.
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.)
- Make the school policy easily accessible to parents and carers.
- Keep parents informed about the topics that children are learning about in school.
- Carry out parent workshops/information sessions to raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing.

8. Staff 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 to enable them to keep students safe. We will publish relevant information to staff who wish to learn more about mental health and this policy will be provided to all staff as part of their induction. Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate. Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with Rachel Forward and/or Caroline Stone, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

In addition to this, Rachel Forward, Caroline Stone and Ruth have completed a Mental Health First Aid course. Rachel Forward has also completed a Mental Health Lead course (DfE funded).

9. Supporting Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing

At Hildenborough CE Primary School, we recognise that staff are our most important resource and we seek to value our staff through personal and professional support. As well as supporting staff to be confident and skilled to support the mental health and wellbeing of our children, we also support staff to be aware of

Love. Compassion. Courage. Endurance. Hope. Honesty

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” (Philippians 4:13) so that I can be the best that I can be, for myself, for others and for God.

their own mental health and wellbeing. This is an essential component of being a healthy school and we implement the following strategies to support staff at all levels:

- Actively demonstrate recognition and acceptance of common mental and physical health problems by creating an environment where staff feel comfortable in asking for help.
- Foster a supportive work environment, operating in a fair and consistent manner.
- Ensure that there is clear communication between staff and management with regards to all areas of school life. This includes regular staff meetings and a staff noticeboard to keep everyone informed.
- Regular staff wellbeing ‘check-ins’ and surveys, where feedback is listened to and acted upon.
- Opportunity to discuss wellbeing as part of twice-yearly performance reviews, as well as when required on a day-to-day basis.
- Support staff to maintain a healthy work life balance, ensuring that we remove unnecessary burdens/ workload.
- Access to HR and/or SAS for wellbeing Support.
- Regular training (as detailed above).

Updated: September 2025
Next review on: September 2026

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” (Philippians 4:13) so that I can be the best that I can be, for myself, for others and for God.

Appendix A: Tiered approach to supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing

Tier 1	
Celebration Act of Worship	Once weekly assembly to celebrate the achievements of children across the school, including academic, behaviour and sporting achievements.
Christian Values	Our Christian Values of Love, Compassion, Courage, Endurance, Hope and Honesty are taught explicitly as learning values.
Circle Time	Occasional circle time to encourage collaborative learning and improve listening and responding skills.
Growth Mind Set	A strategy used to encourage pupils to think positively about their learning, even when faced with challenges.
Peer Mediation	Children working together to solve problems led by Year 6 pupils.
PHSE Lessons	Once weekly lessons using a comprehensive PSHE programme (Kapow) to support children in developing into fully rounded children who are healthy, sociable and emotionally literate. The programme covers key concepts and skills to support pupils’ spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development. It builds on the core theme areas identified by the PSHE Association: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships • Health and Wellbeing • Living in the Wider World
Play Leaders	Key Stage 2 pupils leading sporting activities/games to promote inclusion and participation for all children.
School Council	A group of pupils who were elected to represent the views of all pupils. The lead on school improvement and charity work.
Six Principles of Nurture	The Six Principles of Nurture are well embedded at Hildenborough School and underpin/ inform our nurturing practice.
Well-being Week	A week dedicated to well-being related activities, with a focus on the ‘six ways to wellbeing’.
Displays and information around the school about positive mental health and where to go for help and support	Visual support that the children can refer to in relation to mental health and wellbeing.
Tier 2	
Individual ‘Talk Time’	Opportunities for children to talk to a trusted adult if they feel necessary. This is usually unstructured and accessed as needed.
Specific support for loss, separation, divorce and bereavement	Specific support offered by a trained member of staff.
Transition Support (between classes, key stages and schools)	Specific support to enable smooth transition between classes, key stages and schools.

Love. Compassion. Courage. Endurance. Hope. Honesty

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” (Philippians 4:13) so that I can be the best that I can be, for myself, for others and for God.

Zones of Regulation	A programme used to teach emotional regulation. Adults encourage children to recognise their emotions and teach them strategies in order to be able to respond appropriately.
Tier 3	
Signposting to outside agency	See school website for list of agencies.
Therapeutic Play sessions	Weekly sessions for children who need more structured/personalised emotional support. These sessions are run by Caroline Stone but are child led.
Tier 4	
Referral to Early Help	https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/early-help-support-for-families
Referral to the School Health Team	https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/school-health/
Referral to CYPMHS	https://www.nelft.nhs.uk/services-kent-children-young-peoples-mental-health/

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” (Philippians 4:13) so that I can be the best that I can be, for myself, for others and for God.

Appendix B: National Nurturing Schools Award

Link to school website: <https://www.hildenborough.kent.sch.uk/curriculum/wellbeing>

Link to Nurture UK Award Report: [Hildenborough NNSP Report.pdf](#)