



Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy

Courthouse Junior School

Approved by:	Full Governing Body	Date: 16 th July 2020
Last reviewed on:	N/A	
Next review due by:	June 2023	

1. Aims

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)

At Courthouse Junior School, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and all pupils. 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, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents or carers

2. 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.

This policy should be read in conjunction with 'Supporting children with medical conditions' policy in cases where a pupil's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

3. Lead members of staff

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

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Fiona Hayes	01628 626958 fhayes@courthousejunior.co.uk
Deputy DSLs	Nick Hart, Toby Little, Beverley Roberts, Kim Stevens, Tracey Harvey	01628 626958
SENDCo	Fiona Hayes	01628 626958 fhayes@courthousejunior.co.uk
Mental Health Lead	Fiona Hayes	01628 626958 fhayes@courthousejunior.co.uk
Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs)	Beverley Roberts, Kim Stevens, Tracey Harvey, Denise Harrold	01628 626958
Nurture Practitioners	Beverley Roberts, Kim Stevens, Tracey Harvey, Denise Harrold, Fiona Hayes	01628 626958

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should follow the pathway as shown in Appendix A.

If there is a fear that the pupil is at risk of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSL, the Deputy DSLs or the Head Teacher, as outlined in the school's 'Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy'. 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 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Fiona Hayes, SENDCo, DSL and Mental Health Lead.

4. Individual care plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan (ICP) 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. Appendix C shows an example of an ICP. 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

5. Teaching about mental health

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 PSHE curriculum and can be found throughout our curriculum and assemblies.

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.

6. Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the borough. The support is available within our school and borough, is outlined in Appendix B.

7. 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 Fiona Hayes, Mental Health Lead, following the support pathway shown in Appendix A.

Possible warning signs 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
- 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 secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

8. 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-judgmental.

Staff should listen rather than advise and their first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than exploring the reasons why.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and passed to Fiona Hayes, SENDCo, DSL and Mental Health Lead. 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 will be uploaded onto the school's Child Protection Online Monitoring and Safeguarding system (CPOMs) and staff who need to know will be informed. Parents will also be informed if it is deemed necessary. Referral to agencies may be deemed appropriate. Please refer to the support pathway as shown in Appendix A.

9. Confidentiality

If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on, then we should discuss the following with them:

- 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 will receive their consent, although there are certain situations when information must be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent if we feel that the pupil, is at risk of harm.

Any disclosures from pupils must be shared with an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) and/or Fiona Hayes, Mental Health Lead. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for a pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence; and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain to the pupil with whom we plan to share this information and the reasons why.

Parents (carers) must be informed if the information shared by the pupil may put the child's life in danger or at risk.

If a pupil gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the DSL or Deputy DSLs must be informed immediately.

10. Working with parents (carers)

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
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our SEMH Policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular parent consultation 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.

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents of an SEMH issue that has been identified, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we will consider the following questions (on a case-by-case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, and other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

We recognize 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 will be sympathetic (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information and give parents leaflets to take away where possible as they may find it challenging 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. 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 steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record. If needed a record of the meeting will be emailed home.

11. 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 with 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 or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend may need 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

12. 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 pupils safe.

The [MindEd learning portal](https://www.minded.org.uk)¹ 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 and understanding about specific issues will be considered as part of our professional development process and additional training will be delivered as required.

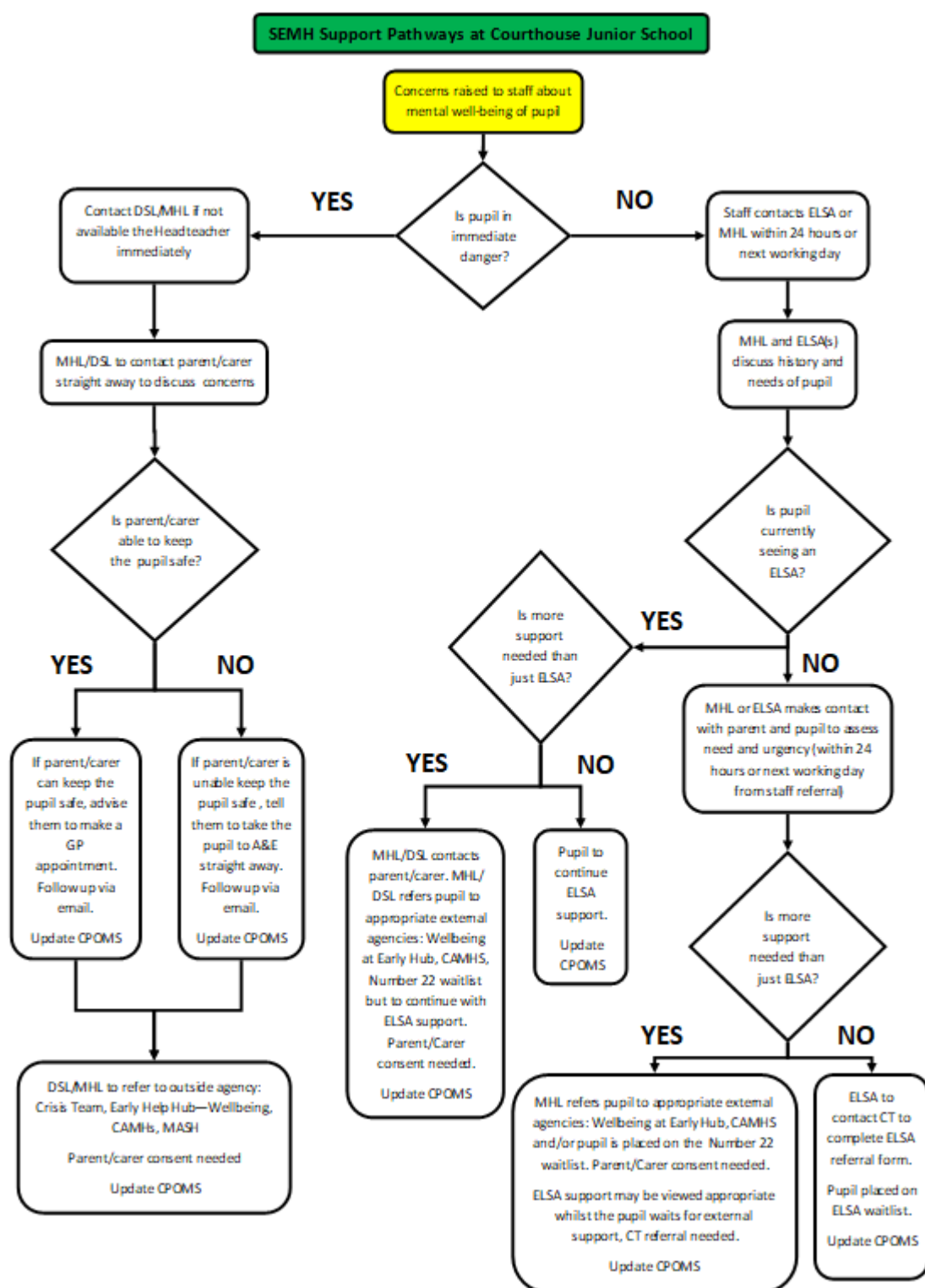
Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host additional training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

13. Policy review

The policy will be kept up to date to reflect any personal changes and reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. Next review will be July 2023.

¹ www.minded.org.uk

Appendix A



Appendix B

Sources of help and support available:

- Mental Health Lead
- Classroom support by all staff
- ELSA support
- Nurture Groups
- Mental Health First Aider
- SEMH twice yearly questionnaires to identify pupils who may need additional support
- Classroom support by all staff

External Agencies

- [Early Help Hub - Wellbeing Team](#)
- [Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services \(CAMHS\)](#)
- Number 22, counselling service
- Crisis Team – for emergencies
- [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\)](#)

Appendix C

Individual Care Plan - SEMH			
Pupil		Date of Birth	
Year Group		Class & Teacher	
Details on SEMH condition			
Special requirements whilst in school?			
Medication & any side effects?			
In an emergency:			
What to do			
Who to contact			
What Courthouse can do day to day to help the pupil			
Written by		Date	
MHL signed off		Date	
Date shared with parents		Date shared with staff	