



Full Governors
26.03.25
Signed *[Signature]*

Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy

Statement of intent

This policy outlines the framework for Portway Infant School to meet its duty in providing and ensuring a high quality of education to all of its pupils, including pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties, and to do everything it can to meet the needs of pupils with SEMH difficulties.

Through the successful implementation of this policy, we aim to:

- Promote a positive outlook regarding pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- Eliminate prejudice towards pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- Promote equal opportunities for pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- Ensure all pupils with SEMH difficulties are identified and appropriately supported – minimising the risk of SEMH difficulties escalating into physical harm.

We will work with the Local Authority with regards to the following:

- The involvement of pupils and their parents/carers in decision-making
- The early identification of pupils' needs
- Collaboration between education, health and social care services to provide support when required
- Greater choice and control for pupils and their parents/carers over their support

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children and Families Act 2014
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2002
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Children Act 1989

This policy has been created with regard to the following DfE guidance:

- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and behaviour in schools'
- DfE (2016) 'Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future'
- DfE (2015) 'Special educational needs and disabilities code of practice: 0 to 25'

This policy also has due regard to the school's policies including, but not limited to, the following:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- SEND
- Behaviour
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Administering Medication
- Suspension and Exclusion
- Anti-bullying
- Relationships and Health (RHE)
- Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC)

Roles and Responsibilities

The school's leadership, as a whole, is responsible for,

- Using a preventative approach to create a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely to occur, in order to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the school community and instil resilience in pupils. A preventative approach includes teaching pupils about mental wellbeing through the curriculum and reinforcing these messages in our activities and ethos.
- Ensuring that only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem.
- Ensuring that staff are aware of how potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences (ACE), including abuse and neglect, can impact on a pupil's mental health, behaviour and education.
- Equipping staff with the knowledge required to identify pupils whose behaviour suggests they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.
- Raising awareness and employing efficient referral processes in order to help pupils access evidence-based early support and interventions.
- Working effectively with external agencies to ensure the school can provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment.
- Identifying and supporting pupils with SEND, and considering how to use some of the SEND resources to provide support for pupils with mental health difficulties that amount to SEND.
- Identifying where wellbeing concerns represent safeguarding concerns, and ensuring that appropriate safeguarding referrals are made in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The governing board is responsible for:

- Fully engaging pupils with SEMH difficulties and their parents/carers when drawing up policies that affect them.
- Ensuring provision is in place for all pupils with SEMH difficulties, whether or not they have an EHC plan.
- Endeavouring to secure the special educational provision called for by a pupil's SEMH difficulties.
- Designating an appropriate member of staff to be the SENDCO ensuring they coordinate provisions for pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- Taking all necessary steps to ensure that pupils with SEMH difficulties are not discriminated against, harassed or victimised.
- Ensuring arrangements are in place to support pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- Ensuring there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible SEMH problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.
- Identifying an appropriate staff member to act as the senior mental health lead, with sufficient authority to develop and oversee the school's approach to mental health and wellbeing.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that those teaching or working with pupils with SEMH difficulties are aware of their needs and have arrangements in place to meet them.
- Ensuring that teachers monitor and review pupils' academic and emotional progress during the course of the academic year.
- Ensuring that the SENDCO has sufficient time and resources to carry out their functions, in a similar way to other important strategic roles within the school.
- On an annual basis, carefully reviewing the quality of teaching for pupils at risk of underachievement, as a core part of the school's performance management arrangements.
- Ensuring that staff members understand the strategies used to identify and support pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- Ensuring that procedures and policies for the day-to-day running of the school do not directly or indirectly discriminate against pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- Establishing and maintaining a culture of high expectations and including pupils with SEMH difficulties in all opportunities that are available to other pupils.
- Consulting health and social care professionals, pupils and parents/carers to ensure the needs of pupils with SEMH difficulties are effectively supported.
- Keeping parents/carers and relevant staff up-to-date with any changes or concerns involving pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- Ensuring staff members have a good understanding of the mental health support services that are available in their local area, both through the NHS and voluntary sector organisations.

The senior mental health lead is responsible for:

- Overseeing the whole-school approach to mental health, including how this is reflected in policies, the curriculum and pastoral support, how staff are supported with their own mental health, and how the school engages pupils and parents/carers with regards to pupils' mental health and awareness.
- Collaborating with the SENDCO, headteacher and governing board, as part of the SLT, to outline and strategically develop SEMH policies and provisions for the school.
- Coordinating with the SENDCO and mental health support teams to provide a high standard of care to pupils who have SEMH difficulties.
- Being a key point of contact with external agencies, especially the mental health support services, the LA, LA support services and mental health support teams.
- Providing professional guidance to colleagues about mental health and working closely with staff members, parents/carers and other agencies, including SEMH charities.
- Referring pupils with SEMH difficulties to external services, e.g., specialist children and young people's mental health services to receive additional support where required.
- Liaising with parents/carers of pupils with SEMH difficulties, where appropriate.
- Liaising with other schools, educational psychologists, health and social care professionals, and independent or voluntary bodies.
- Liaising with the potential future providers of education, such as Portway Junior School teachers and leaders, to ensure that pupils and their parents/carers are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned.
- Leading mental health CPD.
- Undertaking senior mental health lead training.

The SENDCO is responsible for:

- Collaborating with the governing board, headteacher and the senior mental health lead, as part of the SLT, to determine the strategic development of SEMH policies and provisions in the school.
- Undertaking day-to-day responsibilities for the successful operation of the SEMH Policy.
- Supporting the subject teachers in the further assessment of a pupil's particular strengths and areas for improvement, and advising on the effective implementation of support.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Acting as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff.
- Liaising with staff on matters of safety, safeguarding and welfare.
- Liaising with the senior mental health lead when safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health.

All staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of the signs of SEMH difficulties.
- Being aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a pupil has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Understanding how potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences can impact a pupil's mental health, behaviour and education.
- Being aware of the needs, outcomes sought and support provided to any pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- Keeping the extended leadership team up-to-date with any changes in behaviour, academic developments and causes of concern.

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- Planning and reviewing support for their pupils with SEMH difficulties in collaboration with parents/carers, the SENDCO and, where appropriate, the pupils themselves.
- Setting high expectations for every pupil and aiming to teach them the full curriculum, whatever their prior attainment.
- Planning lessons to address potential areas of difficulty to ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving their full potential, and that every pupil with SEMH difficulties will be able to study the full national curriculum.
- Being responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class.

The school will work in collaboration with mental health support workers who are trained professionals who act as a bridge between schools and mental health agencies.

Staff training

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will ensure that all teachers have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with SEMH needs.

The SLT will promote Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to ensure that staff can recognise common symptoms of mental health problems, understand what represents a concern, and know what to do if they believe they have spotted a developing problem.

Clear processes will be in place to help staff who identify SEMH problems in pupils escalate issues through clear referral and accountability systems.

Staff will receive training to ensure they:

- Promote good mental health and wellbeing throughout the school.
- Can quickly identify individual pupils who need support with their mental health.
- Know what support is available for pupils and how to refer pupils to such support where needed.
- Are aware of how abuse, neglect, and/or other traumatic adverse childhood experiences can have a lasting impact on a pupil's mental health, behaviour and education.

As a minimum, all staff will receive annual safeguarding training which incorporates recognising and responding to mental health issues. Staff have access to The National College where a range of specific training is available around supporting children with their mental health and well-being. Specific CPD needs are identified by SLT and Extended Leadership Team (ELT) to ensure everyone is meeting the needs of the children.

Key members of staff

Whilst all members of staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of children, staff with a specific, relevant remit are detailed in the table below.

Role	Person
Headteacher	Mrs Lisa McSherry head@portwayi.derby.sch.uk
Assistant Headteacher	Mrs Hayley Anderson h.anderson@portwayi.derby.sch.uk
Learning Mentor	Miss Emma Wood e.wood@portwayi.derby.sch.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Mrs Lisa McSherry safeguarding@portwayi.derby.sch.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL)	Mrs Hayley Anderson h.anderson@portwayi.derby.sch.uk Miss Emma Wood e.wood@portwayi.derby.sch.uk Mrs Claire Stockwell (SENCO) c.stockwell@portwayi.derby.sch.uk
Senior Mental Health Lead for staff and children	Miss Emma Wood e.wood@portwayi.derby.sch.uk
Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) Lead	Miss Emma Wood e.wood@portwayi.derby.sch.uk
Relationships and Health Education (RHE) Lead	Miss Emma Wood e.wood@portwayi.derby.sch.uk

Identifying signs of SEMH difficulties

The school is committed to identifying pupils with SEMH difficulties at the earliest stage possible.

Staff are trained to know how to identify possible mental health problems and understand what to do if they spot signs of emerging difficulties.

Staff members are aware of the signs that may indicate if a pupil is struggling with their SEMH. The signs of SEMH difficulties may include, but are not limited to, the following list:

- Anxiety
- Low mood
- Being withdrawn
- Avoiding risks
- Unable to make choices
- Low self-worth
- Isolating themselves
- Refusing to accept praise
- Failure to engage
- Poor personal presentation
- Lethargy/apathy
- Daydreaming
- Unable to make and maintain friendships
- Speech anxiety/reluctance to speak
- Task avoidance
- Challenging behaviour
- Restlessness/over-activity
- Non-compliance
- Mood swings
- Impulsivity
- Physical aggression
- Verbal aggression
- Perceived injustices
- Disproportionate reactions to situations
- Difficulties with change/transitions
- Absconding
- Eating issues
- Lack of empathy
- Lack of personal boundaries
- Poor awareness of personal space

When the school suspects that a pupil is experiencing mental health difficulties, the following graduated response is employed:

- An assessment is undertaken to establish a clear analysis of the pupil's needs
- A plan is set out to determine how the pupil will be supported
- Action is taken to provide that support
- Regular reviews are undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the provision, and changes are made as necessary

Where appropriate, the headteacher asks parents/carers to give consent to their child's GP to share relevant information regarding SEMH with the school.

Where possible, the school is aware of any support programmes GPs are offering to pupils who are diagnosed with SEMH difficulties, especially when these may impact the pupil's behaviour and attainment at school.

Staff members will discuss concerns regarding SEMH difficulties with the parents/carers of pupils who have SEMH difficulties, and take any concerns expressed by parents/carers, other pupils, colleagues and the pupil in question seriously. Staff will consider all previous assessments and progress over time, and then refer the pupil to the appropriate services.

The assessment, intervention and support processes available from the Local Authority (LA) are in line with the local offer. All assessments are in line with the provisions outlined in the school's SEND Policy.

Staff members are aware of the following:

- Factors that put pupils at risk of SEMH difficulties, such as low self-esteem, physical illnesses, academic difficulties and family problems
- The fact that risks are cumulative and that exposure to multiple risk factors can increase the risk of SEMH difficulties

Staff members understand the following:

- Familial loss or separation, significant changes in a pupil's life or traumatic events are likely to cause SEMH difficulties
- What indicators they should be aware of that may point to SEMH difficulties, such as behavioural problems, pupils distancing themselves from other pupils or changes in attitude
- Where SEMH difficulties may lead to a pupil developing SEND, it could result in a pupil requiring an EHC plan.
- Persistent mental health difficulties can lead to a pupil developing SEND. If this occurs, the headteacher ensures that correct provisions are implemented to provide the best learning conditions for the pupil, such as providing school counselling. Both the pupil and their parents/carers are involved in any decision-making concerning what support the pupil needs.

The school will promote resilience to help encourage positive SEMH. Poor behaviour is managed in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. Staff members will observe, identify and monitor the behaviour of pupils potentially displaying signs of SEMH difficulties; however, only medical professionals will make a diagnosis of a mental health condition.

Pupils' data is reviewed on a weekly basis by the SLT and Senior Mental Health Lead so that patterns of attainment, attendance or behaviour are noticed and can be acted upon if necessary.

An effective pastoral system is in place so that every pupil is well known by at least one member of staff who can spot where disruptive or unusual behaviour may need investigating and addressing.

Staff members are mindful that some groups of pupils are more vulnerable to mental health difficulties than others; these include Looked After Children (LAC), pupils with SEND and pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Supporting children with their mental health

In the first instance, any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child should speak to the child's class teacher. The class teacher will then liaise with the parents/carers (if appropriate at the time), the DSL or DDSL as well as the senior mental health lead who will ensure all a whole picture of the child is created. If there is a fear that the child is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated safeguarding lead or, in their absence, a deputy safeguarding lead. If the child presents a with medical emergency, then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting a first aider and/or contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Safeguarding children is of the upmost importance. For urgent mental health support, we follow our school safeguarding policies and procedures. For non-urgent mental health support, we have mapped out our current whole school, targeted support and referral support service systems (see appendix).

Children's mental health and well-being, like safeguarding, is the responsibility of all staff. Identification, assessment, planning and targeted support is carried out by teaching staff including SLT and the DSL. Staff record any concerns they may have regarding children's mental health via CPOMS, our Child Protection and Online Management System.

Individual Education Plans (IEP)

For those children who have a primary area of need which is social, emotion and mental health (SEMH), an individual education plan (IEP) will be written detailing the reasons for needed the IEP and current targets

to work on. An IEP is written by the child's class teacher and shared with both the SENDCO and the parents/carers to gain their view and the child's view. IEPs are reviewed termly.

One-page profiles

Children who require targeted support or have been referred to an outside agency may have a one-page profile. This profile is written with the child and the headings are as follows:

- What is important to me
- What others like about me
- What things you need to know to support me

Teaching Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves 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 are teaching but we will also use the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner; we follow the scheme "PSHE Matters" by Derbyshire County Council.

Identifying children with emerging mental health needs

Emerging needs are initially identified by members of staff; these concerns electronically logged on our school CPOMS. All members of SLT have access to these logged concerns. Once a child has been identified by staff, the class teacher will use our current provision map to see what support is needed for that child. We then follow the "plan, do, review" cycle to support the child accordingly. Once the needs are established, we liaise with parents/carers and the appropriate referral services to support the child's mental health.

The warning signs for potential mental health concerns may include but are not exclusively,

- poor attendance
- punctuality
- friendship and relationship issues
- negative behaviour patterns
- poor physical health
- recent bereavement
- recent trauma
- family problems
- behaviour towards learning
- drop in attainment

Targeted support

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- zones of regulation
- circle time
- well-being chats
- PSHE work
- support from the learning mentor
- play therapy
- lunchtime nurture groups
- mindfulness activities
- One to one time with Learning mentor

The school will make use of available resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate including Boxhall profiling.

Vulnerable groups

Some pupils are particularly vulnerable to SEMH difficulties. These 'vulnerable groups' are more likely to experience a range of adverse circumstances that increase the risk of mental health problems. Staff are aware of the increased likelihood of SEMH difficulties in pupils in vulnerable groups and remain vigilant to early signs of difficulties.

Vulnerable groups include the following:

- Pupils who have experienced abuse, neglect, exploitation or other adverse contextual circumstances
- Children in need
- LAC and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)
- Socio-economically disadvantaged pupils, including those in receipt of, or previously in receipt of, free school meals and the pupil premium

These circumstances can have a far-reaching impact on behaviour and emotional states. These factors will be considered when discussing the possible exclusion of vulnerable pupils.

Children in need, LAC and PLAC

Children in need, LAC and PLAC are more likely to have SEND and experience mental health difficulties than their peers. Children in need, LAC and PLAC are more likely to struggle with executive functioning skills, forming trusting relationships, social skills, managing strong feelings, sensory processing difficulties, foetal alcohol syndrome and coping with change.

Children in need may also be living in chaotic circumstances and be suffering, or at risk of, abuse, neglect and exploitation. They are also likely to have less support available outside of school than most pupils.

School staff are aware of how these pupils' experiences and SEND can impact their behaviour and education.

The impact of these pupils' experiences is reflected in the design and application of the school's Behaviour Policy, including through individualised graduated responses. The school will use multi-agency working as an effective way to inform assessment procedures.

Where a pupil is being supported by LA children's social care services (CSCS), the school will work with their allocated social worker to better understand the pupil's wider needs and contextual circumstances. This collaborative working informs assessment of needs and enables prompt responses to safeguarding concerns.

When the school has concerns about a looked-after child's behaviour, the designated teacher and virtual school head (VSH) will be informed at the earliest opportunity so they can help to determine the best way to support the pupil.

When the school has concerns about a previously looked-after child's behaviour, the pupil's parents/carers or the designated teacher will seek advice from the VSH to determine the best way to support the pupil.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and other events that impact pupils' SEMH

The balance between risk and protective factors is disrupted when traumatic events happen in pupils' lives, such as the following:

- **Loss or separation:** This may include a death in the family, parental separation, divorce, hospitalisation, loss of friendships, family conflict, a family breakdown that displaces the pupil, being taken into care or adopted, or parents/carers being deployed in the armed forces.
- **Life changes:** This may include the birth of a sibling, moving house, changing schools or transitioning between schools.
- **Traumatic experiences:** This may include abuse, neglect, domestic violence, bullying, violence, accidents or injuries.
- **Other traumatic incidents:** This may include war and natural disasters.

Some pupils may be susceptible to such incidents, even if they are not directly affected. For example, pupils with parents/carers in the armed forces may find global disasters or terrorist incidents particularly traumatic.

The school will support pupils when they have been through ACEs, even if they are not presenting any obvious signs of distress – early help is likely to prevent further problems. Support may come from the school's existing support systems or via specialist staff and support services.

SEND and SEMH

The school will recognise it is well-placed to identify SEND at an early stage and works with partner agencies to address these needs. The school's full SEND identification and support procedures are available in the SEND Policy.

Where pupils have certain types of SEND, there is an increased likelihood of mental health problems. For example, children with autism or learning difficulties are significantly more likely to experience anxiety.

Early intervention to address the underlying causes of disruptive behaviour includes an assessment of whether appropriate support is in place to address the pupil's SEND.

The headteacher considers the use of a multi-agency assessment for pupils demonstrating persistently disruptive behaviour. These assessments are designed to identify unidentified SEND and mental health problems, and to discover whether there are housing or family problems that may be having an adverse effect on the pupil.

The school recognises that not all pupils with mental health difficulties have SEND.

The graduated response is used to determine the correct level of support to offer (this is used as good practice throughout the school, regardless of whether or not a pupil has SEND).

All staff understand their responsibilities to pupils with SEND, including pupils with persistent mental health difficulties.

The SENDCO will ensure that staff understand how the school identifies and meets pupils' needs, provides advice and support as needed, and liaises with external SEND professionals as necessary.

Risk factors and protective factors

There are a number of risk factors beyond being part of a vulnerable group that are associated with an increased likelihood of SEMH difficulties, these are known as risk factors. There are also factors associated with a decreased likelihood of SEMH difficulties, these are known as protective factors.

The table below displays common risk factors for SEMH difficulties (as outlined by the DfE) that staff remain vigilant of, and the protective factors that staff look for and notice when missing from a pupil.

	Risk factors	Protective factors
In the pupil	• Genetic influences • Low IQ and learning disabilities • Specific development delay or neuro-diversity • Communication difficulties • Difficult temperament • Physical illness • Academic failure • Low self-esteem	• Secure attachment experience • Outgoing temperament as an infant • Good communication skills and sociability • Being a planner and having a belief in control • Humour • A positive attitude • Experiences of success and achievement • Faith or spirituality • Capacity to reflect
In the pupil's family	• Overt parental conflict including domestic violence • Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted) • Inconsistent or unclear discipline • Hostile and rejecting relationships	• At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult) • Affection • Clear, consistent discipline • Support for education • Supportive long-term relationships or the absence of severe discord

	• Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs • Physical, sexual, emotional abuse, or neglect • Parental psychiatric illness • Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder • Death and loss – including loss of friendship	
In the school	• Bullying including online (cyber bullying) • Discrimination • Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships • Deviant peer influences • Peer pressure • Child-on-child abuse • Poor pupil-to-teacher/school staff relationships	• Clear policies on behaviour and bullying • Staff behaviour policy (also known as code of conduct) • 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems • A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health • Good pupil-to-teacher/school staff relationships • Positive classroom management • A sense of belonging • Positive peer influences • Positive friendships • Effective safeguarding and child protection policies. • An effective early help process • Understand their role in, and are part of, effective multi-agency working • Appropriate procedures in place to ensure staff are confident enough to raise concerns about policies and processes and know they will be dealt with fairly and effectively
In the community	• Socio-economic disadvantage • Homelessness • Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events • Discrimination • Exploitation, including by criminal gangs and organised crime groups, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation • Other significant life events	• Wider supportive network • Good housing • High standard of living • High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying • Opportunities for valued social roles • Range of sport/leisure activities

SEMH intervention and support

The curriculum for PSHE and RSHE will focus on promoting pupils' resilience, confidence and ability to learn. Positive classroom management and working in small groups is utilised to promote positive behaviour, social development and high self-esteem.

The school will develop and maintains pupils' social skills, for example, through one-to-one or small group work.

Where appropriate, parents/carers will have a direct involvement in any intervention regarding their child. The school will support parents/carers in the management and development of their child.

Serious cases of SEMH difficulties are referred to Children and Young Peoples Mental Health Service (CYPMHS).

To ensure referring pupils to CYPMHS is effective, staff will follow the process below:

- Use a clear, approved process for identifying pupils in need of further support
- Document evidence of their SEMH difficulties
- Encourage the pupil and their parents/carers to speak to the pupil's GP
- Work with local specialist CYPMHS to make the referral process as quick and efficient as possible
- Understand the criteria that are used by specialist CYPMHS in determining whether a pupil needs their services
- Have a close working relationship with the local CYPMHS specialist
- Consult CYPMHS about the most effective things the school can do to support pupils whose needs aren't so severe that they require specialist CYPMHS

The school will implement the following approach to interventions:

- Interventions are structured in a way that addresses behavioural issues through education and training programmes
- Individual pupil-orientated interventions are less effective than ones that involve parents/carers, and so parents/carers are involved in interventions where appropriate
- Parental training programmes are combined with the pupil's intervention to promote problem-solving skills and positive social behaviours
- Small group sessions will take place and focus on developing cognitive skills and positive social behaviour
- Well-established nurture groups are in place to address any emerging SEMH difficulties in pupils
- Play-based approaches are in place to develop more positive relationships between pupils and their parents/carers
- Specific classroom management techniques for supporting pupils are in place. These techniques may include, for example, using a token system for rewards or changing seating arrangements
- Can include reduced timetables or dedicated sessions with counsellors.

Working with other schools

The school will work with local schools to share resources and expertise regarding SEMH.

Commissioning local services

The school will commission appropriately trained, supported, supervised and insured external providers who work within agreed policy frameworks and standards and are accountable to a professional body with a clear complaints procedure.

The school does not take self-reported claims of adherence to these requirements on face value and always obtains evidence to support such claims before commissioning services.

The school commissions support from school nurses and their teams to:

- Build trusting relationships with pupils.
- Support the interaction between health professionals and schools – they work with mental health teams to identify vulnerable pupils and provide tailored support.
- Engage with pupils in their own homes – enabling early identification and intervention to prevent problems from escalating.

Working with parents/carers

The school will work with parents/carers wherever possible to ensure that a collaborative approach is utilised which combines in-school support with at-home support.

The school will ensure that pupils and parents/carers are aware of the mental health support services available from the school.

Parents/carers and pupils are expected to seek and receive support elsewhere, including from their GP, NHS services, trained professionals working in CYPMHS, voluntary organisations and other sources.

Working with Alternative Provision (AP) settings

The school will work with AP settings to develop plans for reintegration back into the school where appropriate.

The school will share information with AP settings that enables clear plans to be developed to measure pupils' progress towards reintegration into mainstream schooling, further education or employment. These plans link to EHC plans for pupils with SEND.

Administering medication

The full arrangements in place to support pupils with medical conditions requiring medication can be found in the school's Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

The governing board will ensure that medication is included in a pupil's IHP, where recommended by health professionals.

Staff know what medication pupils are taking, and how it should be stored and administered.

Misbehaviour, suspensions and exclusions

When suspension or exclusion is a possibility, the school will consider contributing factors, which could include mental health difficulties. All decisions to suspend or exclude a pupil will be taken in line with the Suspension and Exclusion Policy.

Where there are concerns over behaviour, the school will carry out an assessment to determine whether the behaviour is a result of underlying factors such as undiagnosed learning difficulties, child protection concerns or mental health problems, in line with the Behaviour Policy. Where underlying factors are likely to have contributed to the pupil's behaviour, the school will consider whether action can be taken to address the underlying causes of the disruptive behaviour, rather than issue a suspension or exclusion. If a pupil has SEND or is a looked-after child, exclusion will only be used as a last resort.

In all cases, the school will balance the interests of the pupil against the mental and physical health of the whole school community.

Safeguarding

If a staff member has a SEMH concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will take immediate action in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and speak to the DSL or a deputy DSL.

Supporting staff with their mental health

Supporting our staff's mental health and well-being is extremely important as we recognise our staff are the best resource we have; they are the key to effectively support the learning and progress of our children. Staff workload is therefore continually monitored throughout the academic year to ensure it is weighted correctly and not causing staff any undue stress.

Our senior mental health lead is continually working to develop and implement strategies to support mental health and well-being. This is on-going and needs to adapt with the changing needs of the staff at our school.

The following are in place in order to help facilitate and demonstrate this,

- The headteacher has an open-door policy and is happy to make time for staff to express any concerns as well as signpost them to other staff members and services that may help them.
- Year group leaders are given the flexibility to allow their team members to make timetable changes to help reduce stresses and pressure.
- Teaching assistants have regular meetings to discuss issues that may have arisen. The minutes are shared with the head teacher who addresses and resolves any issues.
- Subject leaders are allocated time out of class to complete administrative tasks around their subjects and, if more time is needed, they are encouraged to speak to the headteacher and SLT to request this.

If a staff member is struggling with a significant, urgent mental health issues, then either the DSL, DDSL, Mental Health Lead or a member of the ELT will follow staff safeguarding procedures to ensure they are safe and then referred to the appropriate support or health service. This policy is reviewed in light of any serious SEMH-related incidents with any changes made to this policy are communicated to all members of staff.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

Emma Wood

Reviewed spring 2026

To be reviewed spring 2027

