





To inspire, enrich and nurture so each individual reaches their full potential

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Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

March 2026

To be reviewed biennially in the Spring Term

Next Review: March 2028

History of Document:

Issue No.	Date Issued	Prepared By	Approved By	Comments
Issue 1	March 2023	Ashley Holmes	Full Trust Board	Policy Created and to be reviewed after first year of publication.
Issue 2	March 2024	Ashley Holmes	Victoria Hobson	Section 2 and 8 updated
Issue 3	March 2026	Ellen Summers	Victoria Hobson	Staff names and roles updated and links checked. No statutory changes required.

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

1. Policy Statement

At Hatfield Community Free School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our school community; including families, parents and carers and trustees.

We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, with each individual and contribution being valued.

At our school, we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable at times, and anyone may need additional emotional support from time to time. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's responsibility and business and that we all have a role to play.

At our school we:

- Help children to understand their emotions and feeling better through our Thrive® Approach¹;
- Help children feel comfortable sharing concerns and worries;
- Help children socially to form and maintain friendships;
- Promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count;
- Encourage children to be confident and celebrate diversity;
- Help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school core 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.

¹ The Thrive® Approach offers settings practical strategies and skills to improve emotional wellbeing and social wellbeing; increasing attendance, reducing anxiety and enhancing learning. It involves engaging children in art activities that reduce stress and developing an underlying focus on the wellbeing of pupils, staff and parents.

We pursue our aims through:

- A whole school approach;
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement;
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long term difficulties including attachment disorder.

2. Lead Members of Staff

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

- Victoria Hobson: Principal and Designated Safeguarding Person;
- Ashley Holmes: SENCO and Senior Mental Health Lead;
- Ellen Summers: Assistant Vice Principal (Pastoral), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person and Thrive Practitioner;
- Joanne Pape: Vice Principal (Teaching and Learning) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person.
- Sarah Dobson: Thrive Practitioner
- Amalak Francis: Thrive Practitioner

3. Teaching About Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves mentally and safe are included as part of our PSHE and RSE curriculum. We use the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that the teaching of mental health and wellbeing issues takes place in a safe and sensitive manner.

The specific content of lessons is determined by the specific needs of the cohort being taught.

4. Targeted Support

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

- Circle time approaches and activities;
- Managing feelings resources e.g. 'worry boxes', 'worry eaters' and The Zones of Regulation;
- Therapeutic activities including play therapy and Thrive® activities.

The school makes use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate including:

- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaires;
- Thrive® Profiling.

5. Signposting

We will ensure that staff, trustees, pupils and families, parents and carers are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support (<https://www.hcfs.org.uk/send-local-offer/>).

6. Identifying Needs and Warning Signs

All staff are held accountable for the wellbeing of the pupils and have regular training to identify a range of possible difficulties including:

- Attendance;
- Punctuality;
- Relationships;
- Approaches to learning;

- Physical indicators;
- Online safety concerns;
- Safeguarding concerns;
- Negative behaviour patterns;
- Family circumstances;
- Recent bereavement;
- Health indicators.

School staff may also become aware of warning signs that 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 immediately with the Designated Safeguarding Person or as appropriate.

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.

School staff are also accountable for looking after their own mental health and knowing who they can talk to and where to seek support. Support can be found from:

- <https://www.developmentcounts.com/you-are-responsible-for-your-own-well-being/#:~:text=It%20may%20be%20a%20difficult,self%20takes%20time%20to%20cultivate.>
- <https://arthealthsolutions.com/workplace-wellbeing-who-is-responsible/>

7. 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;
<https://www.hcfs.org.uk/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support/>
- 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 wellbeing and mental health 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 may be learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this at home;
- Signpost the Local Offer <https://www.hcfs.org.uk/send-local-offer/>.

8. 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 through Welwyn and Hatfield Hub;
- Paediatricians;
- CAMHS (Child and Adult Mental Health Service);
- Counselling services;
- Family Support Workers;
- Therapists (including Play Therapists);
- Outreach Support through Howe Dell Primary School
- Social Workers.
- Mental Health Support Team at the University of Hertfordshire.

9. Training

Staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their annual child protection training in order to enable them to keep children safe. All staff have received Therapeutic Thinking training. The Thrive Practitioners update their training annually.

The Minded Learning Portal provide free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue (www.minded.org.uk).

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed biennially by the Senior Mental Health Lead. At every review, approval will be delegated to the Principal.