



# **EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH POLICY**

Policy Date: September 2026  
Reviewed by: Senior Leadership Team  
Next Review: September 2027

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| <b>THE REDWAY SCHOOL</b>                            |                                       |
| <b>EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH POLICY</b> |                                       |
| <b>Policy Date: September 2026</b>                  | <b>Due for review: September 2027</b> |

### **Policy Statement : “Prevention, promotion and support.”**

At The Redway School, we are committed to supporting the **emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils**<sup>1</sup> and staff. 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 in recognising warning signs and knowing how to signpost and support both pupils and colleagues.

We recognise the enormous challenges in identifying and supporting mental health issues in children with profound and severe learning difficulties but are compelled to push the boundaries in this understudied area. Our aim is to champion the needs of children and young people whose voice may be difficult for society to hear; this is achieved by ‘enabling voice’<sup>2</sup> through direct and indirect teaching, establishing community and through our own research.

### **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 Curriculum, Behaviour and Anti-bullying, and PSHE, RSE, SMSC and Bereavement policies. It should also sit alongside child protection procedures.

### **Policy Aims**

At The Redway School we:

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and students.
- Help children to understand their emotions and feelings better by specialist support and teaching
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues<sup>3</sup>
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in students, with an understanding of how mental health issues might be identified in non-verbal children and young people
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.

<sup>1</sup> The teaching of emotional wellbeing forms part of our Redway Curriculum both as direct and indirect learning, see the Redway curriculum document for details of our approach.

<sup>2</sup> See Redway statement on Cultural Capital

<sup>3</sup> This will be achieved through staff training and through the expansion of extended training for specific staff members, this will include basic ‘Mental Health Awareness’ and more specific Mental Health First Aid training

- Provide the right support to students with mental health issues and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- To work with all agencies in identifying the very specific needs of children and young people with profound needs
- Develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience-building techniques for all students
- Raise awareness within the school community that we all have mental health and that at times anyone may have mental health difficulties, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff and student welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.
- Know our pupils really well and make in-depth observations to understand the mental health needs of all pupils, including those with profound and complex needs<sup>4</sup>.
- Help children, through a specialist approach, to socially form and maintain relationships.
- Promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they matter
- Help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks by providing strategies to cope through **positive behaviour approaches**<sup>5</sup>
- Provide a sense of **'Belonging'**<sup>6</sup>

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of **belonging**.
- Embedding wellbeing throughout our curriculum
- Promoting pupil voice<sup>7</sup> and opportunities to participate in decision-making
- Celebrating All achievements
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others allowing pupils to be as independent as possible
- Providing opportunities to reflect.
- Access to appropriate support that meets their needs
- Access to a 24 hour employee assistance scheme to support with all aspects of mental health and emotional wellbeing.

We pursue our aims through:

- Universal, whole-school approaches
- Support for pupils, families and staff experiencing difficulties

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<sup>4</sup> All assessment across school is observational, this allows us to really appreciate subtle changes in behaviour. Formats will include Engagement model, B Squared (moving toward Redway assessment scales), evidence for learning samples, behaviour watch

<sup>5</sup> Positive behaviour plans are highly personalised and provide a detailed care plan which allows the reader to understand more about the context of a pupil's situation and details how to provide the best support. Please also see The Redway curriculum document which highlights in detail how we teach and support positive approaches to behaviour through direct teaching.

<sup>6</sup> Belonging forms an important part of The Redway Curriculum and can be viewed in depth in the curriculum documents. We believe 'Belonging' underpins positive wellbeing.

<sup>7</sup> Pupils voice for non-verbal children must explore the idea of 'voice' differently. See also our document on 'character' and 'Cultural Capital' to understand how we include everyone's voice

- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils, through direct teaching and whole-school approaches
- Always striving to show tolerance, kindness, listening and human connection

### **Key Staff Members**

At The Redway School our aim is to ensure that all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils; however key members of staff have specific roles to play.

|                                                |                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Headteacher</b>                             | Simon Hodges                                                                                                 |
| <b>Designated Senior Lead – Mental Health</b>  | Sarah Sykes                                                                                                  |
| <b>DSL</b>                                     | Louise O'Dell                                                                                                |
| <b>Deputy DSL</b>                              | Samantha Lazard<br>Sarah Sykes                                                                               |
| <b>Assistant DSLs</b>                          | Simon Hodges<br>Rob Gibbard<br>Tracy Snook<br>Peter Markham<br>Julia Wayment<br>Crina Ceocoiu<br>Kerry Jones |
| <b>Governor –</b>                              | Nina Broderick                                                                                               |
| <b>Senior Mental Health and Wellbeing Team</b> | Sarah Sykes<br>Crina Ceocoiu                                                                                 |

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil, in the first instance they should speak to a member of the lead team for mental health. If there is a concern that the pupil is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed. If the child presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services.

### Individual Care Plans

Pupils at the Redway School all have complex needs, including severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties and many pupils have a diagnosis of ASD. We witness emotional wellbeing, mental health and difficulties associated with their learning disability overlapping which can often make diagnosis a difficult task. With this in mind, we want to raise awareness of mental ill health and poor emotional wellbeing within this group understanding that we really need to know and understand the pupil to best represent their needs. This can be achieved through close monitoring to understand changes in behaviour, presentation and mood.

All pupils, whether referred to CAHMS or not, will have plans that provide details of the pupil's special requirements, strategies and engagement tools that help us to understand a pupil's emotional well-being. All plans involve parents and other agencies as necessary. Where possible, pupils are involved in understanding their plan and have a say in it.

A small percentage of pupils are referred to CAMHS or other organisations, we work closely with other agencies to ensure a 'well rounded' picture of the pupil's needs are represented in order to improve overall wellbeing and life chances.

### Teaching About Mental Health

Teaching about mental health is embedded within our curriculum and is clearly demonstrated in our progression tables in all five areas of the **Redway Curriculum**. Teaching about wellbeing and modelling how it feels to be mentally and emotionally well are central to our ethos. From the first moment of greeting in the morning to circle time and goodbye at the end of the day we seek to provide pupils with opportunities to promote wellbeing by developing healthy coping strategies, showing kindness and a feeling of **belonging** that can help to shape lives.

For targeted teaching we draw on the content of the '**Emotional wellbeing – Keeping Healthy and Safe**' sphere of The Redway Curriculum. This part of our curriculum provides in depth coverage of all aspects of emotional health and wellbeing that are important to all but particularly those pupils with complex needs and profound disabilities. Within this sphere we draw on the guidance issued by the PSHE association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively. [Teaching about Mental Health](#)

### Signposting and Local Support

We recognise the importance of signposting in helping pupils, families and staff to identify the best forms of support for them. Our mental health first aid team is there to help the school community in identifying the best form of supportive help. We encourage the school

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community to reach out through accessible forums such as notice boards, newsletters, social media, website, parent forums, staff meetings and other supervision activities. In addition, we encourage making and taking small steps that can be equally powerful in asking for help. Our work with MK children with disabilities social work team and complex needs nursing team is a strong support for both children and families. Our aim is to help the school community understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why they should access it
- What is likely to happen next

### **Identifying Needs and Warning Signs**

For all children at The Redway School we use methods of close observation, knowing and understanding the detailed and precise needs of the individual pupil really well helps us to identify subtle changes which may indicate poor mental health. Many children at The Redway School are non-verbal and have a range of needs where their learning disability overlaps with poor mental health, we know that children with disabilities are more like to suffer with mental ill health. Possible warning signs may include:

- Physical signs of harm through self-injurious behaviour
- Changes in eating habits /sleeping habits
- Changes in activity and mood
- Changes in behaviour towards others which may include aggressive or violent behaviour
- Changes in willingness to engage in activities or human connection
- Withdrawing from interaction
- Isolating both physically and mentally e.g., moving into corners to escape interaction
- Becoming too reliant on specific individuals
- Avoiding activities that have been previously enjoyed

All warning signs are taken seriously and staff observing these warning signs should communicate their concerns to the DSL, DSL-MH or the wellbeing team as appropriate.

Alongside observation of pupils, staff also have close contact with families and other agencies to give a more rounded picture of possible mental ill health. We look at the Risk and Protective factors surrounding the child, please see chart on the following page.

**Table 1: Risk and protective factors that are believed to be associated with mental health outcomes** (taken from the DFES Mental Health and Behaviour in schools document)

| Risk factors                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Protective factors in the child                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Genetic influences</li> <li>▪ Low IQ and learning disabilities</li> <li>▪ Specific development delay or neuro-diversity</li> <li>▪ Communication difficulties</li> <li>▪ Difficult temperament</li> <li>▪ Physical illness</li> <li>▪ Academic failure</li> <li>▪ Low self-esteem</li> <li>▪ Overt parental conflict including domestic violence</li> <li>▪ Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted)</li> <li>▪ Inconsistent or unclear discipline</li> <li>▪ Hostile and rejecting relationships</li> <li>▪ Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs</li> <li>▪ Physical, sexual, emotional abuse, or neglect</li> <li>▪ Parental psychiatric illness</li> <li>▪ Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder</li> <li>▪ Death and loss – including loss of friendship</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Secure attachment experience</li> <li>▪ Outgoing temperament as an infant</li> <li>▪ Good communication skills, sociability</li> <li>▪ Being a planner and having a belief in control</li> <li>▪ Humour</li> <li>▪ A positive attitude</li> <li>▪ Experiences of success and achievement</li> <li>▪ Faith or spirituality</li> <li>▪ Capacity to reflect in the family</li> <li>▪ At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult)</li> <li>▪ Affection</li> <li>▪ Clear, consistent discipline</li> <li>▪ Support for education</li> <li>▪ Supportive long term relationship or the absence of severe discord</li> </ul> |

## Targeted Support

At The Redway School we offer targeted approaches<sup>8</sup> for individual pupils or groups of pupils which explore the individual needs of the pupils in order to enhance their feeling of belonging and therefore positive wellbeing, this includes:

- The Redway Curriculum, specifically our 'spheres', **Emotional Wellbeing Keeping Healthy and safe** and **'Independence and Community Participation – Belonging'**
- Circle time approaches, a time to **share, celebrate and 'be'**
- Therapeutic activities such as **art, Lego, mindfulness yoga, music**
- **1:1 support for specialist communication**
- **Positive behaviour approaches**
- **Outdoor learning**
- **Forest School**
- **Rebound therapy**
- **Hydrotherapy**
- **Structured play**

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<sup>8</sup> The Redway Curriculum is made up of five core spheres, **Independence and Community Participation**, **Sensory and Physical skills**, **Communication and Interaction**, **Cognition and Learning** and **Emotional wellbeing Keeping Healthy and Safe**

- **Supporting emotional regulation through 1:1 intervention**

### **Working with parents and carers**

We recognise that working with families plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; our aim is to work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Highlighting sources of information and support through our school website and social media platforms
- Sharing and allow parents to access sources of further support through parent forums
- Ensuring parents are aware of who to talk to and how to access further support for their child
- Making our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Sharing ideas of how parents can support positive mental health in their children
- Keeping parents informed about mental health topics their children are learning about through The Redway Curriculum and sharing ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

In addition, we aim to provide support for parents in recognising their own mental health needs through parent forums both direct and remote and through signposting.

### **Working with other agencies**

In addition to our school-based targeted provision we will work with other agencies to support children's mental health; this includes working with:

- The complex needs nursing team
- Children with disabilities social work team CWDSWT
- Educational Psychology service
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS
- Therapists
- Adults with Learning disabilities team ALDT

### **Training**

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular Safeguarding and child protection training in order enable them to keep pupils safe.

In addition, staff have the opportunity to complete wellbeing courses which may explore a wider approach to wellbeing, including how to support colleagues and the wider school community,

A number of staff have the opportunity to complete a mental health first aid qualification, accredited by Mental Health England, in order to support the overall approach to wellbeing within the school and wider school community. Staff with this qualification form part of the mental health team and are champions for mental health across the school.

Staff also receive training on the schools targeted approaches, including how The Redway Curriculum itself not only embeds wellbeing into all areas but that it also contains specific areas on the teaching of wellbeing and positive mental health.