



# The Winterton Federation Mental Health & Well-being Policy



## Cover Letter

These are key staff members with specific roles:

<b>NAME:</b>	<b>ROLE AND SITE BASED AT:</b>
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# The Winterton Federation Mental Health & Well-being Policy



At The Winterton Federation we endeavour to nurture unique individuals in a happy, safe, respectful and inclusive environment, where everyone is inspired to be the best they can be throughout their journey of life.

“Let us run with perseverance, the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1)

We are all proud to be united in faith, vision and ambition.

## 1. Safeguarding Statement

At The Winterton Federation, we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn, in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all the federation activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at The Winterton Federation. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access the federation and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

## 2. Vision Statement

It is our vision that all children are entitled to develop to their fullest potential academically, socially, emotionally and into healthy well beings, enabling each child to grow in confidence and be able to fully participate in everything that goes on in the wider community with confidence. It is widely recognised that a child’s emotional health and wellbeing influences their cognitive development and learning, as well as their physical and social health and their mental well-being in adulthood. The Department for Education recognises that, in order to help their pupils succeed, schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy.

“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 Organisation 2014)

The Winterton Federation aims to promote positive mental health for every child, parent/carer and staff member. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at identified vulnerable pupils and families.

## 3. Policy statement

At The Winterton Federation, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional well-being to all children, their families, members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows pupils’ voices to be heard, 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.

## 4. Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff, including non-teaching and governors, outlining The Winterton Federation’s approach to promoting mental health and emotional well-being. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

## 5. Policy Aims

The Winterton Federation aims to:

- promote positive mental health and emotional well-being in all staff and children;
- increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues;
- enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in children;
- enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues;
- provide the right support to children with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support;



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- develop resilience amongst children and raise awareness of resilience building techniques;
- instil a culture of staff and children's welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around both schools in the Federation.

### 6. The role of staff and visitors

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, however key members of staff have specific roles to play. Please see cover letter.

If a member of the federation is concerned about the mental health or well-being of a child, in the first instance they will speak to a MHC. If there is a concern that the child is high risk or in danger of immediate and/or significant harm, the DSL or DDSL is informed immediately and the federation's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures are followed. If the child presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures are followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

### 7. Individual Pupil Support

When a pupil has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, staff are informed so that consistent support can be given across the federation. Extra pastoral or SEN support is given, based around the specific needs of the child/family. Communication and support continues with appropriate external agencies and an Early Help plan may need to be put in place outlining:

- details of the child's situation/condition/diagnosis;
- special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions;
- medication and any side effects;
- who to contact in an emergency;
- the role the school and specific staff;
- the role of any external agencies;
- the family situation and support network for the child.

### 8. Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our children need to keep themselves, and others, physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum.

We follow the 1Decision programme of study for our curriculum which is kite marked by the PSHE association. We incorporate this into our curriculum at all stages and it provides us with good opportunities to promote pupils' well-being through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of pupils' own emotions as well as those of other people.

Additionally, we use ELSA resources, Thrive resources, Anna Freud resources, Mentally Healthy Schools, Assembly/Collective Worship themes and PSHE Association Mental Health Toolkit, to provide children who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as engaging children to support any of their friends who are facing challenges. This also promotes resilience in our children. Grounding activities are used on a daily basis when the children come in after lunchtime. Our children from year 1 through to year 6 have a carefully chosen book that they use as an English text for reading comprehension that they use as a stimulus for writing throughout mental health week.

### 9. Support Based Across the Federation

We ensure that staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services. This is done through our federation website and Ping apps; we share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events. Posters are displayed in both schools to identify the Mental Health Champions across the federation and well-being /growth mindset displays are present in



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each classroom. Across the federation, each classroom has a worry monster that is checked and dealt with by the classroom adults then passed onto a key member of staff if needed.

Nurture support is available for pupils identified as being vulnerable to mental health issues. Pupils who are going through difficulties such as family illness, separation, bereavement, or other stressful situations, are supported with one to one or small group pastoral support, (e.g. Emotional Literacy, games, drawing, colouring, mindfulness, circle time etc.) We have a well-being dog at both schools which give huge well-being benefits to pupils, staff and visitors in school. Pupils can also spend time with their adult buddy in school if they prefer.

### 10. Local Support

In North Lincolnshire, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support in children and young people's mental health wellbeing, including CAMHS, Barnardos, Changing Lives Through Changing Minds and With Me In Mind. These organisations deliver accessible support to children, young people and their families, whilst working with professionals to reduce the range of mental health issues through prevention, intervention, training and participation.

### 11. Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a child is experiencing mental health or emotional well-being issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these should alert a key member of staff (see cover letter).

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of include:

- *Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental;*
- *Changes in eating/sleeping habits;*
- *Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn;*
- *Changes in activity and mood;*
- *Lowering of academic achievement, change in concentration;*
- *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;*
- *Avoiding PE or getting changed secretly;*
- *Unusual increase in lateness to, or absence from school;*
- *Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause;*
- *Evidence of making themselves vomit after food or hiding food/not eating.*

### 12. Targeted Support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We work closely with the school nursing team in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of school-aged children and are equipped to work at community, family and individual levels. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating.

We ensure timely and effective identification of children who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- identifying children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional and behavioural problems;



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- working with Children's Services, CAMHS and other agencies to follow protocols including assessment and referral;
- discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers;
- agreeing an Early Help Plan if needed;
- providing a range of interventions, i.e. circle time, Emotional Literacy etc.
- provide children with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns;
- provide children with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it;
- the identification, assessment, and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014.

Any support offered follows The Winterton Federation procedure regarding confidentiality.

### 13. Managing disclosures

If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. All disclosures will be recorded confidentially on CPOMS by the member of staff that the disclosure was made to, making sure that:

- the correct date and time of the disclosure is entered;
- the nature of the disclosure and main points are clearly entered using the child's own words during the conversation;
- which key member of staff this disclosure was passed on to.

Once a key member of staff has been informed, a decision will be made about the next steps and what appropriate support is given.

### 14. Confidentiality

Mental health or/and well-being concerns about a child, are passed on to a Mental Health Champion initially and a confidential discussion is had, detailing the next steps needed to support the child. The listener never promises the child that they will keep the child's issues a secret. This discussion, as well as,

any targeted support that is required, involves the child every step of the way. Support may be given in house or by external agencies.

The federation realises the importance to safeguard staff emotional well-being, therefore, supervision is given to the relevant member of staff or indeed a visitor, if this is who the child has decided to confide in. This helps to relieve the burden of concerns and also ensures continuity of care, should staff absence occur. It also provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Parents are informed if concerns are raised about a child's mental health. However, if a child gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, the Winterton Federation child protection procedures will be followed before a decision to inform parents.

### 15. Whole Federation approach

#### 15.1 Working with parents/carers

We are mindful that for a parent/carer, hearing concerns about their child can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and process the situation.

Signposting parents/carers to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. Lines of communication are kept open should the parents/carers have further questions or concerns. A record of the meeting and points discussed/agreed are added to CPOM's and an Early Help Plan created if appropriate.



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### 15.2 Supporting parents/carers

We recognise that 'family' plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and well-being. Parents/carers are often very welcoming of support and information from the federation about supporting their children's emotional well-being and mental health. In order to support parents, we:

- highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our federation website and app;
- ensure that all parents/carers are aware of who they can talk to, and how to get the support they need if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child;
- make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents/carers;
- share ideas about how parents/carers can support positive mental health in their children through our regular review meetings;
- keep parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home;
- ensure parents/carers and other family members living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional well-being;
- support parents/carers to participate in any parenting sessions (*toddlers sessions*). We realise that this may involve liaising with family support agencies i.e. the Children's Centre.

### 16. Supporting Peers

When a child is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. To keep peers safe, we consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support is provided in one to one or group settings and is guided by conversations had with the child who is suffering and possibly their parents. We discuss:

- what it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told;
- how friends can best support them;
- things friends should avoid doing/saying which may inadvertently cause upset;
- warning signs that tell them their friend needs help.

Additionally, we want to highlight with peers:

- where and how to access support for themselves - MHC, Pastoral Team, Adult Buddies etc.
- safe sources of further information about their friend's condition;
- healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling.

### 17. Training

As a minimum, all staff 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. In addition, we have a number of staff who are Mental Health Champions (see cover letter).

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge are considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD is supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more pupils.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health. The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

### 18. Staff Mental Health

We recognise that anyone can experience mental health issues for various reasons which may be out of their control. There may also be work related factors that could contribute to poor mental health such as work life imbalance, work load pressure, poor working conditions. To every extent possible, we aim to recognise and address



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cases of workplace pressures that contribute to mental health issues. We have introduced many well-being strategies, including:

- Mental Health Week which includes positive statements and gifts for staff;
- social events - staff breakfasts, evenings out, school events;
- staff WhatsApp group;
- PPA and marking can be done at home when possible;
- access to LA Confidential Staff Welfare and Counselling Service and Occupational Health;
- dress down Friday.

We use a staff well-being survey to gain knowledge of how staff are feeling, as well as having an open door policy for talking about any issues that staff may need to talk about.

See Appendix A, fig.1 and fig.2 for our whole federation approach to mental health and well-being.

### **Loss and bereavement**

Some children and young people will have relatives, friends or pets who have died. Regardless of the type of loss, many will be experiencing this with a sense of grief. The way that our children respond to those feelings of loss and grief will differ widely - some may seem sad or withdrawn, others may appear irritable or angry.

Some useful resources on bereavement, loss and grief are listed below:

- The Mental Health Foundation wrote a piece on loss and change which provides some advice for managing difficult feelings;
- Young Minds have a piece which addresses loss and grief specifically from a young person's perspective;
- Cruse Bereavement Care have a range of resources for schools that may be helpful for supporting pupils who have been bereaved
- Cruse also has information and advice for parents and guardians.

### **Challenging experiences at home**

Some of our pupils have already experienced challenging home environments. These challenging circumstances may have been amplified by the pandemic. Others will be facing challenging home experiences for the first time. These might include, but are not limited to:

- domestic violence;
- abuse or neglect;
- family conflict;
- financial concerns, e.g. loss of employment for parents and guardians;
- worry about relatives who are key workers and continuing to work;
- caring responsibilities for family members;
- hunger and lack of nutrition;
- insecure housing, e.g. those living in residential care, hostels or refuges.

The scale of the challenge, as predicted, has increased incidents of domestic violence. This has significantly increased pastoral care resources. Therefore, mental health and well being is a whole federation approach.

### **Inequalities**

A key challenge may be identifying the different experiences of our pupils and responding to the volume of safeguarding concerns that are likely to arise as pupils begin to open up to their trusted adult in school. Given the nature of the coronavirus pandemic, it's important to remember that these concerns could arise in relation to any child, not just those previously identified as vulnerable, and that many children will have had a range of challenging experiences. Gaps in attainment, physical and emotional health have widened and we acknowledge that it will take time for this gap to be reduced. We are aware that providing extra academic interventions, as well as pastoral support will be needed.



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### **Transitions**

Transitioning to the next school term or year can be very difficult for some children, particularly for those moving from primary to secondary school. A comprehensive transition package is in place as well as extra transition visits for the more vulnerable children.

More information and access resources to support pupils during transition periods can be found on the [Mentally Healthy Schools website](#) and from the [Anna Freud Centre](#).

***Mental Health & Well-being Policy reviewed by Dawn Lovatt and Cheryl Baxter: Spring 2024***

***Policy agreed by Staff: Spring 2024***

***To be reviewed: Spring 2027***



**Fig 1.** The following diagram presents eight principles to promote emotional health and well-being in schools and colleges.





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**Fig 2.** This table shows the targeted and whole Federation approach to mental health and well-being.

	<b>Approaches</b>	<b>Interventions</b>
<b>Whole Federation Approach</b>	Curriculum policy re-write focus on wider curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupil Voice – communication skills, All About Me, EHCP Reviews;</li> <li>• Emotional Literacy skills;</li> <li>• Engagement with external Services - One Family Approach, CAMHS, Ed Psych, School Nursing Team, LA Well-being &amp; Counselling Service;</li> <li>• Self-regulation strategies - behaviour management, CPD training, staff meeting updates;</li> <li>• Virtual School Heads are aware of the MH &amp; WB Policy and any other policies involving Looked After Children.</li> </ul>
	Teaching and learning approaches	
	Holistic/multi-agency approach (individual SEN support plans)	
	Staff training	
<b>Targeted Support</b>	<b>Well-being interventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1:1 sessions provided for focusing on individual well-being outcomes - games, drawing, colouring, mindfulness;</li> <li>• Weekly Group sessions focusing on well-being outcomes - Emotional Literacy, restorative practice;</li> <li>• Weekly Class sessions focusing on well-being outcomes - circle time, assemblies, PSHE lessons, mindfulness;</li> <li>• Identified support linked to pupil premium - life coach sessions, Changing Lives Through Changing Minds play therapy, With Me in Mind, Lego Zone;</li> <li>• Personalised differentiated learning opportunities.</li> </ul>