

UNITED SCHOOLS FEDERATION



St Michaels C. of E. Nursery & Primary | St Catherine's C. of E. VA Primary | Marldon C. of E. VA Primary | Brixton St Mary's C. of E. VA Primary | Ipplepen Primary | Stokeinteignhead Primary | Doddiscombsleigh Primary School | The Topsham School

MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

The United Schools Federation of Brixton St Mary's, St Michael's, Marldon, Stokeinteignhead, Ipplepen, St Catherine's, Doddiscombeleigh and Topsham, is committed to promoting and protecting the emotional health and wellbeing of all pupils, staff and families. We recognise that mental health is as important as physical health and that all members of our community will experience challenges at times.

We aim to create a culture where everyone feels safe, valued, and able to talk openly about their mental health without stigma.

We believe:

- Mental health is everybody's responsibility
- Children need to be taught knowledge and awareness of their own mental health and how to manage it
- Early intervention is essential
- Positive relationships are central to wellbeing
- Children learn best when they feel safe and supported.

AIMS

We aim to:

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Provide a safe, supportive environment for all
- Enable early identification of needs
- Offer appropriate support and intervention
- Reduce stigma around mental health - Support staff wellbeing

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- All pupils
- All staff
- Parents and carers

It should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) Policy

LEAD ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff have a responsibility to promote mental health. Key roles include:

- **Wellbeing Lead/Counsellor** Alix Harding
- **Federation Safeguarding Lead** Karen West
- **Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and Deputy DSLs** Heads of Schools
- **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo) and Assistant SENDCos** Karen Bristowe Lizzie Hurford Eloise Mowday Charlotte Williams Stephanie Brown Anna Perry Sharon Howlett Katie Church
- **School Counsellors / Play Therapist** Alix Harding Rosie Kelley Sarah Coe Lucy Hobbs and Elouize Newman
- **Mental Health Governor** Liz Thompson

PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH: UNIVERSAL PROVISION

We promote a mentally healthy environment by:

- Embedding a strong, inclusive school ethos
- Teaching mental health through the PSHE curriculum
- Using evidence-based approaches (e.g. Zones of Regulation, MindUp)
- Encouraging pupil voice and participation
- Allowing our Mental Health Ambassadors (MHAs) to be involved in training and promoting important messages about mental health
- Celebrating a wide range of achievements
- Providing opportunities for reflection and responsibility
- Delivering assemblies and pupil-led initiatives
- Supporting physical health as part of wellbeing

Policy reviewed May 2026, next review May 2027

Staff wellbeing is promoted through:

- Access to Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) with Education Support Partnership
- Opportunities for supervision and support
- A culture of openness and care

IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND WARNING SIGNS

All staff are trained to identify early signs of mental health needs, including:

- Changes in behaviour, mood or engagement
- Attendance or punctuality concerns
- Social withdrawal
- Physical symptoms with no clear cause
- Expressions of hopelessness or distress
- Talk of self-harm or suicide

Concerns must always be taken seriously and recorded in line with safeguarding procedures.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS; STAFF PROCEDURE

If a child discloses something concerning about their mental health,

1. Listen calmly and non-judgementally
2. Reassure the pupil they have done the right thing
3. Do not promise confidentiality
4. Record the concern promptly using Child Protection Online Monitoring System (CPOMS or other school system)
5. Report to the DSL and Wellbeing Lead the same day

If there is immediate risk: - Do not leave the pupil alone, inform the DSL immediately and follow safeguarding procedures

TARGETED AND SPECIALIST SUPPORT

Support is provided through a graduated approach:

Targeted support:

- Small group interventions e.g. Mental Health Support Team (MHST) groups

Policy reviewed May 2026, next review May 2027

- Circle of Friends / nurture approaches with trained adult
- Therapeutic play (art, Lego therapy, Drawing and Talking)
- Emotional regulation support – Decider Skills (MHST)

Specialist support:

- Referral to external agencies e.g. MHST or Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Educational Psychology
- School counselling and play therapy

Parents are involved at all stages and parental permission is required for all specialist support.

WORKING WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

We aim to build open, trusting relationships with families.

We work in partnership with parents by:

- Providing information and guidance
- Offering workshops and courses
- Sharing concerns early
- Signposting to external support

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

We respect confidentiality but recognise that safeguarding is paramount.

- Pupils are informed that information may need to be shared to keep them safe
- Information is shared on a need-to-know basis
- All records are stored securely in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

WORKING WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES

We work collaboratively with:

- Mental Health Support Team (MHST)
- Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- School Nursing Service

Policy reviewed May 2026, next review May 2027

- Educational Psychologists
- Family Hubs
- Other specialist services

EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

We recognise that some groups may be at greater risk of mental health difficulties, including:

- Pupils with SEND
- Looked-after children
- Pupils who have experienced trauma

We are committed to inclusive, culturally sensitive practice.

STAFF WELLBEING

We are committed to supporting staff mental health by:

- Promoting a supportive working environment
- Providing access to professional support
- Encouraging work-life balance
- Offering training and supervision where appropriate

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

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required.

Alix Harding May 2026

Policy reviewed May 2026, next review May 2027