



Howe Dell School Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Prepared Spring 2025

To be reviewed: Spring 2027

Policy statement

At Howe Dell, we are committed to supporting the positive mental health and wellbeing of our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers). We recognise that mental health and emotional wellbeing is just as important to our lives as physical health.

At Howe Dell we endeavour to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress.

We aim to ensure that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it.

We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

How the policy was developed

In developing the policy we have taken account of:

- Healthy Young Minds in Herts
- Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing (Public Health England 2015, updated September 2021)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2022)
- Anna Freud school staff wellbeing
- Hertfordshire emotional wellbeing and behaviour strategy
- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (Feb 2023)

Links to other policies

This policy links to our Child Protection Policy, Anti Bullying, SEND Offer, Inclusion policy and our Pro Social Behaviour policy.

It draws on our whole school use of Therapeutic Thinking, a therapeutic approach to behaviour management that aims to use training and resources to understand the causes of behaviours, rather than a focus on the behaviours themselves.

Teaching about mental health

At Howe Dell we take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health, aiming to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to work in a pro-active way. We do this by:

- Creating and applying consistent ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands
- Adhering to Therapeutic Thinking approach to behaviour management
- Focusing on the 5 steps to wellbeing
- Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it
- Promoting self-esteem and ensuring children understand their importance in the world
- Helping children to be resilient learners and to manage set backs.
- Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health

- Identifying children who have mental health challenges and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services, parents and carers
- Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience
- Developing an open culture where it's normal to talk about mental health

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making
- Celebrating achievements through Beacon Pupil, Merit Awards, Attendance Awards and Author of the Month
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Providing opportunities to reflect
- Enabling access to appropriate support
- PSHE (Jigsaw) and RHSE curriculum in place for all year groups
- Mental health assemblies
- Wellbeing Week and access to information around the school
- Information for parents and carers via Newsletters, emails and information on our website
- 'Worry Boxes' in classes

Small group activities

- Social and emotional wellbeing groups to focus on mental health, resilience, and wellbeing
- Social skills groups
- Lego Therapy
- Drawing and Talking
- Protective behaviours
- Lunchtime Wellbeing Club
- Children to be aware that they can drop in and see a designated adult if they are anxious or worried about a certain situation/issue

Staff roles and responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote this in and out of their classrooms.

As a minimum, all staff will receive training about recognising and responding to mental health issues including ACEs as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe. Other CPD sessions include e-modules to upskill staff from MindEd.

Supporting and promoting mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school. At Howe Dell, we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance. Staff are supported pastorally and have access to enriched opportunities. Staff also have access to external support systems which include counselling, physio and stress

coaching. Staff are also signposted to other agencies as outlined in our Staff Wellbeing Policy.

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health and to understand the protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help; all staff should have the skills to identify warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need. Staff will be offered opportunities for further training.

Key staff supporting Mental Health at Howe Dell School

Strategic Lead for Wellbeing and Pastoral Care – Sheryl Wall (Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion)

Named Mental Health Lead – Sheryl Wall (Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion)

Deputy Mental Health Lead – Jenny Field (Inclusion Hub Lead)

Named Mental Health Governor – Mr N Rutnah

Our Mental Health team

- Works with all staff to co-ordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing
- Leads on RHSE teaching and advice on mental health
- Provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates
- Is the first point of contact with mental health services and makes individual referrals to them.

Many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals.

Early identification

We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to improve their mental wellbeing.

- Resources include: When to worry NHS questionnaire, SDQ (Strength and difficulty questionnaire) Boxall profile and Therapeutic Thinking Early Prognosis and Anxiety mapping tools; advice on 'how schools can support children and young person's mental health'
- Changes in patterns may indicate warning signs indicating that a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. Teaching and support staff are responsible for reporting concerns about individual children to designated adults within the school.

Early Identification and Warning Signs

All staff will be vigilant in identifying a range of possible difficulties that may be contributing to a pupil's poor mental health, including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns

- Family circumstance
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which 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 with designated child protection and safeguarding lead (DSL) or the Mental Health Team as appropriate.

Possible warning signs may include:

- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking 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

Assessment, interventions and support

All concerns are reported to the designated adults within school and recorded on CPOMS. The Mental Health Team along with the class teacher and teaching assistant to ensure the child gets the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist services, as quickly as possible.

Working with parents and carers

Parents or carers can approach the class teacher if they have a mental health concern regarding their child. This will be cascaded to the Mental Health Team for guidance.

To support parents and carers we:

- Provide information online via www.howedell.herts.sch.uk on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes
- Share ideas about how parents and carers can support positive mental health in their children
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics taught in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this at home through home learning

When a concern has been raised, Howe Dell teachers or the Mental Health Team will:

- Contact parents to discuss the outcome of any assessment (Although there may be cases, parents and carers cannot be involved due to child protection issues)
- Discuss any relevant referrals to external agencies
- Signpost parents to further information or provide resources to take away
- Discuss how parents can support their child through strategies or signposts to parenting support groups

Working with specialist services

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing. Your child may be referred to one of the following services for additional support.

- CAMHS
- Step 2
- Healthy Young Minds in Herts
- School Nursing Service
- Children's Wellbeing Practitioners
- Children's Services
- School Family Worker
- Educational psychology services
- Family Centres
- Behaviour support through DSPL 5/Howe Dell's Behaviour Outreach Service. This also provides behaviour outreach services to other schools in the Welwyn and Hatfield borough.