

Freeman's Endowed Church of England Junior Academy



Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

2021-2022

Safeguarding

At Freeman's Endowed Church of England Junior Academy 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 academy 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 Freeman's Endowed Church of England Junior Academy. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access academy and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

Our School Vision and Values

At Freeman's Endowed CE Junior Academy, we believe all children should have a safe and happy place to learn. To do this, we aim for all children to demonstrate positive behaviour at all times, both in and out of the classroom.

Our aim is for children to manage their own behaviour and to be responsible for their own actions. Our school is committed to creating a caring, secure and stimulating environment in which individuals feel respected, included and valued. We believe this gives individuals the opportunity to reach their full potential emotionally, socially and academically. Because we promote a climate of kindness and want the best for each and every child, we expect everyone in our school community to act as role models promoting our core values:

- **Kindness** - Joshua 2:12 - *'Show kindness to my family because I have shown kindness to you.'*
- **Love** - Mark 12:31 - *'You shall love your neighbour as you love yourself.'*
- **Forgiveness** - Ephesians 4:32 - *'Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.'*
- **Truthfulness** - Psalm 15:2 - *'Walk with integrity, be righteousness, speak with truth.'*
- **Perseverance** - Philipians 4:13 - *'I can do all things through him who strengthens me.'*
- **Acceptance** - Romans 15:7 - *'Accept one another, just as Christ has accepted you.'*

Policy Intent Statement

At Freeman's Endowed Church of England Junior Academy, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all children, their families and 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.

What do we mean by mental health?

We all have mental health; how good this is depends on many factors and it may be helpful to consider our own mental health as being on a continuum, recognising that it is not static. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as: *A state of wellbeing in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.*

The WHO also says that *'mental health is an integral and essential component of health' and with wellbeing [is] fundamental to our collective and individual ability as humans to think, emote, interact with each other, earn a living and enjoy life. On this basis, the promotion, protection and restoration of mental health can be regarded as a vital concern of individuals, communities and societies throughout the world'* and in turn a core ingredient of effective schooling.

At Freeman's we:

- Help children understand their emotions and how they feel
- Help children feel comfortable sharing their emotions, especially their concerns or worries.
- Help children socially, to form and maintain friendships.
- Promote self esteem and self worth.
- Encourage children to be confident in being themselves, not having to be like others.

We create a positive environment by:

- Promoting our school values
- Encouraging a sense of belonging
- Promoting pupil voice and an opportunity to be part of decision making.
- Celebrating our achievements.
- Providing an opportunity to reflect.
- Offering time in class to be mindful.
- Providing support when it is needed.
- Providing a space for time out.

Mental health and wellbeing and the Church of England vision for education

The core of the *Church of England's Vision for Education* is underpinned by the belief that education should support human flourishing, or 'fullness of life'. This should equip children and young people in their understanding of who they are, why they are here, what they desire and how they should live. The vision also puts emphasis on a rounded education which should equip young people with strong foundations that will carry them through into adulthood.

The new SIAMS framework also acknowledges the importance of schools supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people and staff.

Scope

This policy is a guide for school staff – including teachers, non-teaching staff, volunteers and governors – outlining Freeman's Endowed Church of England Junior Academy's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

Key Staff Members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of students, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mrs F Hull)
Deputy Designated Safeguarding leads (Mrs C Medcalfe, Mr J Healy)
Mental Health First Aiders (Mrs C Medcalfe)
SENCO (Mrs J Taylor)
PSHE lead (Miss K Mack)
Learning Mentor (Mrs L Riccioni)

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child, in the first instance they should speak to the DSL and/or the Wellbeing Team. If there is a concern that the child 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 if necessary.

The DfE has produced a useful document for schools to refer to when planning: *Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing*. At Freeman's we endeavour to develop and follow the eight principles to

promote emotional health and wellbeing:

1. Leadership and management

Joanne Taylor is the designated member of the school leadership team who champions organisation-wide practices and looks to see actions are: integrated, sustained and monitored for impact; responsive to pupil and parent voice; and fully linked to other avenues of support.

2. School ethos and environment

At Freeman's the staff work hard to ensure that the physical, social and emotional environment for both pupils and staff promotes a culture of respect value and diversity. As a Church of England we ensure that our Christian vision supports the flourishing of pupils and staff.

3. Curriculum, teaching and learning

At Freeman's we provide a focus within the curriculum and informal curriculum for social and emotional learning; and developing personal resilience. Opportunities for assessing these are utilised to help identify those in need of further support.

As a Church of England school, we work hard to build spiritual opportunities that will nurture young people.

4. Pupil voice

Ensuring pupils are involved in decisions that impact them or can benefit their mental health and wellbeing and develop agency to influence change. As a Church of England school, we encourage our young people to be courageous advocates and support them to become agents of change.

5. Staff development, health and wellbeing

Freeman's staff have access to training to equip them to identify mental health difficulties in their pupils and to refer them to appropriate support in school or externally. Promoting staff health and wellbeing is a key principle of the school's approach to mental health and wellbeing.

6. Identifying need and monitoring impact

We use a variety of tools to understand and plan a response to our pupil's mental health and emotional needs and monitor closely the impact of any support given. This is done sensitively and where there are particular concerns, additional professional advice is sought.

7. Working with parents/carers

At Freeman's we try hard to work in partnership with parents and carers to promote mental health and wellbeing and offer or signpost support for parents and carers developing their parenting skills. We ensure families in disadvantaged circumstances can participate fully in activities by being mindful of costs, transport and other needs.

8. Targeted support

At Freeman's we ensure that support for children's mental health and wellbeing needs is timely, through identification and referral practices especially for children at greater risk, for example, children in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAHMS, those living in households with mental illness or domestic violence. Due to the complexity of mental health and wellbeing needs, we work in partnership with other agencies to support the pupils in our care. Our Family Support Worker signposts parents to support that is available locally and knows how to support families to access this in a timely manner.

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.

Additionally, we will use such lessons to provide children who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting children to support any of their friends who are facing challenges.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, children and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services. Within the school (e.g. during adult classes) and through our communication channels (newsletters, website), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

Support at School

Nurture support is available for children identified as being vulnerable to mental health issues. Children who are going through difficulties such as family illness, separation, bereavement, or other stressful situations are supported with small group work (e.g. gardening, cooking, games) with our Wellbeing team (Family Support Worker, SENDCO, DSL, Learning Mentor) or specialist groups.

Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a child 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 alert the designated child protection lead/ named persons.

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
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
Lateness to, or absence from school
Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
An increase in lateness or absenteeism

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 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;
- Working with Children's Services, CAMHS and other agencies services to follow protocols including assessment and referral
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers.
- Agreeing an Individual Care Plan
- Providing a range of interventions
- 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;
- Any support offered will take account of Academy policies regarding confidentiality;

Working with other agencies and partners

Will we work with other agencies to support our children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- School Nurse Services
- Educational psychology services
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS
- Counselling services/Service Six
- Therapists
- Education Inclusion Partnership Team
- Children's Services
- Information Advice Support Services
- Family Support Link
- Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Service

Individual Care Plans

When a child 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, it is recommended that an Individual Care Plan should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals.

This plan should include:

- 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

Managing Disclosures

If a child 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 MyConcern.

Confidentiality

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a child to either someone within or outside of the school, then this will be first discussed with the child. It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. Safeguarding supervision between the named persons relieves the burden of concerns and also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur. It also provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Parents would be informed if concerns are raised about a child's mental health. If a child gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection procedures should be followed.

Whole school approach Working with parents/carers

We are mindful that for a parent, 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 to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. Lines of communication will be kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. A record of the meeting and points discussed/agreed are added to MyConcern and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate.

Supporting Parents

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of and have access to promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems;

- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.);
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills
- Ensuring 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 wellbeing.
- This will include support to participate in any parenting sessions.

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

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 will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the child who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support
- Things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend needs help

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

Training

As a minimum, all staff will 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. A member of staff (FSW) is also a Mental Health First Aider.

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 recognize and address cases of workplace pressures that contribute to mental health issues.

We aim to:

- Treat staff mental illness seriously.
- Proactively support resolution of issues causing concern.
- Support staff members who face mental health problems.
- Create pleasant workplaces
- Encourage communication

Policy Review: This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum.

