



The Pioneers Academy

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

THE PIONEERS ACADEMY

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

Academic Year: 2026–2027

Policy Owner: Headteacher

Mental Health Lead: Mrs Asma Pandor

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mr Saif Ahmad

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Shabnam Parveen

Attendance Officer: Mrs Fariyah Chowdhury

ICT / Online Safety Lead: Mr Aburahman Maniam

Applies to: All pupils and staff

Date of Policy: September 2026

Review Date: September 2027

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Pioneers Academy is committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing for every pupil and member of staff.

The school recognises that positive mental health is fundamental to learning, achievement, attendance, relationships, personal development and safeguarding.

The school aims to create an environment where pupils:

- feel safe;
- feel valued and respected;
- are able to talk about their feelings;
- know where to seek help;
- are listened to without judgement;
- develop resilience and emotional literacy;
- understand how to look after their mental health;
- are supported when experiencing difficulties;
- are encouraged to develop positive relationships;
- are able to access appropriate support when needed.

The school recognises that mental health exists on a continuum and that everyone experiences changes in their emotional wellbeing.

The Pioneers Academy will promote good mental health for all pupils while providing additional support for pupils experiencing mental health difficulties.

2. POLICY AIMS

The aims of this policy are to:

1. promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing across the school;
2. create a supportive and inclusive school environment;
3. reduce stigma surrounding mental health;
4. help pupils develop emotional literacy and resilience;
5. enable pupils to recognise and communicate their feelings;
6. identify emerging mental health concerns at an early stage;
7. provide appropriate support and intervention;
8. ensure mental health concerns are considered alongside safeguarding;
9. work collaboratively with parents and carers;
10. ensure staff know how to respond appropriately to pupils experiencing emotional or mental health difficulties;
11. provide appropriate referral pathways to specialist services;
12. promote staff wellbeing;
13. ensure pupils' mental health needs do not unnecessarily become a barrier to attendance or learning.

The Department for Education recognises that good mental health and wellbeing can improve attendance, engagement in learning, social and emotional skills and academic outcomes.

3. WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH

The Pioneers Academy adopts a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing.

Mental health is not the responsibility of one individual or department.

All staff have a role in creating a positive school culture.

The school will promote wellbeing through:

- leadership;
- relationships;
- curriculum;
- pastoral support;
- safeguarding;
- behaviour management;
- attendance support;
- physical activity;
- positive relationships;
- pupil voice;
- staff wellbeing;

- parental engagement;
 - early identification;
 - appropriate external support.
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4. MENTAL HEALTH LEAD

The school's Mental Health Lead is:

Mrs Asma Pandor

The Mental Health Lead will oversee the school's whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing.

Responsibilities include:

- developing and reviewing the school's mental health provision;
- promoting positive mental health;
- supporting staff to recognise early indicators of mental health difficulties;
- coordinating appropriate interventions;
- maintaining an overview of pupils requiring wellbeing support;
- working with the DSL where concerns have safeguarding implications;
- supporting staff training;
- contributing to curriculum planning;
- supporting pupil voice;
- working with parents/carers;
- identifying appropriate external services;
- monitoring the effectiveness of support;
- promoting staff wellbeing.

The Mental Health Lead does not replace the role of specialist mental health professionals.

Where a pupil requires specialist assessment or treatment, the school will work with parents/carers and appropriate external services.

5. SAFEGUARDING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health and safeguarding are closely connected.

A mental health difficulty does not automatically mean that a safeguarding concern exists. However, some mental health concerns may indicate that a child is at risk of harm or requires safeguarding intervention.

The school will therefore consider the wider circumstances surrounding a pupil.

Concerns requiring immediate safeguarding consideration may include:

- suicidal thoughts or intent;
- serious self-harm;
- significant eating difficulties;
- abuse or neglect;
- exploitation;
- severe emotional distress;
- threats of harm;
- significant changes in behaviour;
- concerns about a pupil's safety at home;
- concerns arising from online activity;
- significant deterioration in attendance;
- disclosure of abuse.

Where a mental health concern may represent a safeguarding concern, staff must report it to the DSL.

The school's safeguarding procedures must be followed.

KCSIE 2026 emphasises that staff should recognise indicators including changes in behaviour or attendance and act immediately on concerns, reporting them to the DSL or deputy.

6. IDENTIFYING MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

Staff should be alert to changes in a pupil's:

- mood;
- behaviour;
- attendance;
- punctuality;
- academic performance;
- friendships;
- appetite;
- sleep-related presentation;
- confidence;
- concentration;
- engagement;
- personal appearance;
- emotional regulation.

Possible indicators may include:

- persistent sadness;
- anxiety;
- withdrawal;
- irritability;
- anger;
- frequent crying;
- loss of interest;
- low motivation;
- difficulty concentrating;
- social isolation;
- sudden behavioural changes;
- repeated physical complaints;
- reluctance to attend school;
- deterioration in academic performance.

These indicators do not necessarily mean that a pupil has a mental health disorder.

Staff should report concerns where they believe a pupil may need additional support.

7. TALKING TO PUPILS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Staff should create opportunities for pupils to talk about their feelings in an appropriate and supportive environment.

When responding to a pupil, staff should:

- listen carefully;
- remain calm;
- take the pupil seriously;
- avoid judgement;
- allow the pupil time to speak;
- acknowledge the pupil's feelings;
- avoid making promises of confidentiality;
- explain that information may need to be shared to keep them safe;
- report significant concerns appropriately.

Staff should not attempt to diagnose a pupil.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

Pupils should understand that staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality where there is a concern about their safety or wellbeing.

Where information indicates that a pupil may be at risk of harm, the information must be shared with the appropriate safeguarding staff.

Staff should explain this sensitively to pupils.

Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with safeguarding and information-sharing requirements.

9. EARLY SUPPORT

The school aims to identify concerns before they escalate.

Early support may include:

- a trusted adult;
- pastoral support;
- regular check-ins;
- emotional regulation strategies;
- mentoring;
- wellbeing activities;
- support with friendships;
- behaviour support;
- attendance support;
- parent/carer involvement;
- adjustments within school;
- referral to appropriate external services.

The type of support provided will depend on the individual pupil's needs.

10. TARGETED SUPPORT

Some pupils may require additional or targeted support.

This may be provided through:

- individual wellbeing plans;
- pastoral intervention;
- structured check-ins;
- mentoring;
- small-group interventions;
- emotional literacy work;
- support with anxiety;
- transition support;
- attendance intervention;

- external counselling or therapeutic services where available;
- referral to appropriate health or specialist services.

Support will be reviewed regularly to determine whether it is effective.

11. SPECIALIST SUPPORT AND REFERRAL

The school recognises that school-based support cannot meet every mental health need.

Where appropriate, the school may work with:

- parents/carers;
- GP services;
- NHS mental health services;
- CAMHS;
- educational psychology;
- school nursing services;
- local authority services;
- counselling services;
- other appropriately qualified professionals.

Where specialist support is required, the school will seek appropriate consent or follow safeguarding procedures where consent is not appropriate or cannot safely be sought.

12. CRISIS RESPONSE

Where a pupil presents with an immediate risk of serious harm to themselves or another person, the matter must be treated as an urgent safeguarding concern.

Examples include:

- an immediate suicide risk;
- serious self-harm;
- a stated intention to seriously harm themselves;
- serious threats to another person;
- a significant mental health crisis.

The member of staff must:

1. remain with the pupil where it is safe to do so;

2. immediately alert the DSL or Deputy DSL;
3. ensure the pupil is supervised appropriately;
4. contact emergency services where necessary;
5. contact parents/carers where appropriate;
6. ensure the incident is recorded;
7. ensure appropriate follow-up support is arranged.

Where there is an immediate risk of serious harm, emergency services should be contacted.

13. SELF-HARM

The school recognises that self-harm can take many forms.

Any disclosure or observation of self-harm must be taken seriously.

Staff must report concerns to the DSL and Mental Health Lead.

The school will consider:

- immediate safety;
- the nature and severity of the behaviour;
- underlying safeguarding concerns;
- whether there is suicidal intent;
- parental involvement;
- specialist referral;
- appropriate school support.

The school will avoid punitive responses to self-harm and will focus on safety, support and appropriate intervention.

14. SUICIDE AND SUICIDAL IDEATION

Any expression of suicidal thoughts or intent must be treated seriously.

Staff must not dismiss comments as attention-seeking or assume that a pupil does not mean what they have said.

The concern must be reported immediately to the DSL.

The school will determine the appropriate safeguarding and clinical response.

Where there is an immediate risk to life, emergency services will be contacted.

15. EATING DIFFICULTIES AND EATING DISORDERS

The school recognises that eating difficulties can have significant physical and psychological consequences.

Possible indicators may include:

- significant changes in eating;
- concerns about body image;
- avoidance of meals;
- excessive exercise;
- rapid weight change;
- distress around food;
- changes in behaviour around eating.

Concerns should be reported to the Mental Health Lead and DSL.

The school will work with parents/carers and relevant health professionals where appropriate.

16. ANXIETY

The school recognises that anxiety can affect:

- attendance;
- learning;
- friendships;
- confidence;
- participation;
- behaviour.

Staff should identify possible triggers and consider reasonable support strategies.

These may include:

- a trusted adult;
- check-ins;
- structured routines;
- transition support;
- safe spaces;
- gradual reintegration following absence;
- communication with parents;

- specialist referral where appropriate.

Anxiety-related absence will not simply be treated as a behaviour problem.

The underlying reasons for absence should be explored.

17. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND MENTAL HEALTH

The school recognises the relationship between mental health and attendance.

A sudden or sustained deterioration in attendance may indicate:

- anxiety;
- bullying;
- emotional difficulties;
- family difficulties;
- safeguarding concerns;
- unmet additional needs;
- other barriers to education.

The Attendance Officer, **Mrs Farihah Chowdhury**, will work with the Mental Health Lead and DSL where attendance concerns may be linked to mental health.

The school will seek to understand barriers to attendance and provide appropriate support.

18. BULLYING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Bullying can have a significant impact on mental health and wellbeing.

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying.

This includes:

- physical bullying;
- verbal bullying;
- relational bullying;
- discriminatory bullying;
- cyberbullying;
- harassment;
- intimidation.

Concerns should be reported immediately.

The school will investigate concerns and provide appropriate support to affected pupils.

19. ONLINE SAFETY AND MENTAL HEALTH

Online activity can significantly affect children's wellbeing.

The school will educate pupils about:

- healthy digital habits;
- cyberbullying;
- social media;
- online comparison;
- harmful content;
- online relationships;
- privacy;
- reporting online abuse;
- seeking help.

The ICT / Online Safety Lead, **Mr Aburahman Maniam**, will work with the Mental Health Lead and DSL where online activity is affecting a pupil's wellbeing or safety.

20. CURRICULUM

Mental health and wellbeing will be promoted through the school's curriculum.

Appropriate topics may include:

- emotional literacy;
- resilience;
- managing emotions;
- healthy relationships;
- friendships;
- self-esteem;
- coping strategies;
- stress;
- mental health awareness;
- online safety;
- physical health;
- healthy lifestyles;

- seeking help;
- recognising when someone needs support.

Mental health education will be delivered in an age-appropriate and culturally sensitive manner.

The school's health education provision will reflect the applicable statutory guidance. The DfE's revised Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education guidance came into effect on 1 September 2026.

21. PUPIL VOICE

The school recognises the importance of listening to pupils.

Pupils should have appropriate opportunities to contribute to:

- wellbeing initiatives;
- school culture;
- pastoral provision;
- anti-bullying work;
- mental health activities;
- school improvement.

The school will seek pupil feedback where appropriate.

22. INCLUSION

The school recognises that mental health difficulties can affect any pupil.

Support will be provided without discrimination.

The school will consider the needs of:

- pupils with SEND;
- pupils with medical conditions;
- pupils experiencing disadvantage;
- pupils experiencing family difficulties;
- pupils with attendance difficulties;
- pupils experiencing bullying;
- pupils who are vulnerable to safeguarding concerns.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered where appropriate.

23. PARENT AND CARER PARTNERSHIP

The school recognises that parents and carers play an important role in supporting children's mental health.

Where appropriate, the school will:

- communicate concerns;
- share appropriate strategies;
- encourage parents to seek professional advice;
- work jointly on support plans;
- provide information about relevant services;
- review progress.

The school will respect confidentiality and safeguarding requirements when sharing information.

24. STAFF WELLBEING

The Pioneers Academy recognises that staff wellbeing is important.

The school will promote a working environment where staff are encouraged to:

- maintain healthy boundaries;
- seek support when needed;
- communicate concerns;
- access appropriate support;
- take appropriate breaks;
- maintain a reasonable work-life balance where possible;
- support colleagues appropriately.

Staff should not feel that asking for support represents weakness.

Leaders will seek to identify excessive workload, unnecessary stressors and other factors affecting staff wellbeing.

25. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff should:

- promote positive wellbeing;

- model appropriate emotional behaviour;
 - recognise signs of concern;
 - listen appropriately;
 - report safeguarding concerns;
 - maintain professional boundaries;
 - avoid diagnosing pupils;
 - maintain confidentiality appropriately;
 - know how to access support;
 - contribute to a positive school culture.
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26. SAFEGUARDING ESCALATION

The Mental Health Lead does not replace the DSL.

Where a mental health concern also raises a safeguarding concern, the matter must be referred to:

Mr Saif Ahmad – Lead DSL

or

Mrs Shabnam Parveen – Deputy DSL

The DSL will determine whether safeguarding action is required.

KCSIE 2026 requires staff to act immediately on safeguarding concerns and report them to the DSL or deputy without delay.

27. RECORD KEEPING

The school will maintain appropriate records of significant mental health and wellbeing concerns.

Records may include:

- concern raised;
- date;
- staff member involved;
- pupil's presentation;
- pupil's own words where relevant;
- action taken;
- parental communication;
- referrals;
- support provided;

- review dates;
- outcomes.

Where the concern has safeguarding implications, it must also be recorded through the school's safeguarding procedures.

28. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Mental Health Lead will monitor the effectiveness of the school's approach.

This may include reviewing:

- pupil wellbeing;
- attendance;
- pastoral referrals;
- bullying incidents;
- safeguarding referrals;
- pupil voice;
- staff feedback;
- use of interventions;
- referrals to external services;
- effectiveness of support.

The school will use this information to improve provision.

29. STAFF TRAINING

Staff will receive appropriate information and training to help them:

- recognise signs of poor mental health;
- understand the school's procedures;
- respond appropriately to pupils;
- understand safeguarding links;
- know when to refer concerns;
- promote resilience and wellbeing;
- support pupils without attempting to diagnose or treat mental health conditions.

The school will consider additional training for staff with specific responsibilities.

30. WORKING WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES

The school recognises that effective mental health support often requires partnership working.

The school will work appropriately with external agencies and professionals.

This may include:

- NHS services;
- CAMHS;
- GPs;
- educational psychologists;
- school nursing;
- local authority services;
- specialist counselling services;
- safeguarding agencies.

The school will share relevant information where necessary and lawful to protect or support a pupil.

31. EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The school will ensure that mental health support is accessible and inclusive.

No pupil should experience discrimination because of:

- mental health difficulties;
- disability;
- SEND;
- family circumstances;
- background;
- culture;
- gender;
- religion;
- protected characteristics.

The school will challenge stigma and discriminatory attitudes towards mental health.

32. POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

The Pioneers Academy will promote a culture based on:

Respect

Kindness

Belonging

Safety

Resilience

Honesty

Compassion

Positive relationships

The school recognises that a positive school culture is an important protective factor for children's mental health.

33. MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT PATHWAY

Where a concern is identified, the school will follow an appropriate pathway:

Concern identified

↓

Listen and respond appropriately

↓

Report to Mental Health Lead / appropriate member of staff

↓

Consider whether safeguarding concerns exist

↓

If safeguarding concern → DSL / Deputy DSL



Assess level of need



Universal school support / targeted intervention



Parent/carers involvement where appropriate



External professional referral where required



Review support and monitor progress

34. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Headteacher – Mrs Shabnam Parveen

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that the school promotes pupil wellbeing and has appropriate systems in place.

Mental Health Lead – Mrs Asma Pandor

Responsible for coordinating the school's whole-school mental health and wellbeing approach.

Lead DSL – Mr Saif Ahmad

Responsible for safeguarding concerns, including mental health concerns that may indicate risk of harm.

Deputy DSL – Mrs Shabnam Parveen

Supports the DSL and assumes safeguarding responsibilities when required.

Attendance Officer – Mrs Fariyah Chowdhury

Monitors attendance and identifies where attendance concerns may indicate mental health or safeguarding issues.

ICT / Online Safety Lead – Mr Aburahman Maniam

Supports online safety and responds to online risks affecting pupil wellbeing.

All Staff

Responsible for promoting positive wellbeing, recognising concerns and reporting safeguarding issues promptly.

35. EMERGENCY CONTACTS AND PROCEDURES

Where a pupil is at immediate risk of serious harm:

Contact the DSL immediately.

If there is an immediate emergency, contact 999.

Staff must not leave a pupil who is believed to be at immediate risk of serious harm without appropriate supervision, unless doing so is necessary to obtain emergency assistance.

36. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance or school procedures.

The policy will be reviewed alongside:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- Department for Education mental health and wellbeing guidance;
- Health Education statutory guidance;
- SEND requirements;
- the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- the school's Attendance Policy;
- the school's Behaviour Policy;
- the school's Online Safety Policy.

The DfE's current whole-school mental health guidance recommends an approach involving leadership, staff development, curriculum, pupil voice, targeted support, monitoring and working with parents and carers.

APPROVED BY: The Headteacher

Date: 2nd September 2026

Signed: *S. Parveen*