



# **DURANTS SCHOOL – POLICY DOCUMENT**

## **Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health**

*Created: April 2026 (Carmel Wraight)*  
*Next review date: April 2028*

# Policy statement

## Vision and Rationale

At Durants School, we believe that wellbeing is fundamental to the success, safety and development of both pupils and staff. A positive culture of wellbeing enables pupils to learn, communicate, regulate emotions and build independence, while supporting staff to work effectively, sustainably and with confidence.

As a specialist setting for autistic pupils and young people with additional needs, we recognise that wellbeing must be embedded in every aspect of school life. This includes creating predictable environments, promoting positive relationships, reducing anxiety, supporting communication and responding sensitively to individual needs.

We also recognise that staff wellbeing is essential to maintaining high-quality provision. Staff who feel valued, supported and listened to are better able to provide consistent, calm and effective support for pupils.

The school is therefore committed to developing a whole-school culture where wellbeing is prioritised, inclusion is promoted and every member of the community feels safe, respected and able to thrive.

## Scope

This policy applies to all members of the Durants School community, including:

- all pupils
- teaching staff
- support staff
- leadership staff
- governors and trustees
- agency, temporary and volunteer staff
- contractors and visiting professionals, where relevant
- parents/carers when working in partnership with the school

This policy covers the promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing, early identification of concerns, access to support, and the creation of a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for both pupils and staff.

It should be read alongside other relevant school policies, including:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- SEND Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Health and Safety Policy

## Policy Aims

This policy aims to:

- promote positive wellbeing for pupils and staff
- create a safe, inclusive and respectful environment
- support autistic pupils with communication, sensory and emotional regulation needs
- identify concerns early and provide appropriate support
- reduce barriers to learning and work caused by stress or wellbeing difficulties
- promote positive relationships with families and professionals
- embed wellbeing within school improvement planning

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Promoting wellbeing and positive mental health is a shared responsibility across the whole school community. All staff are expected to help create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for pupils, colleagues and families. Specific staff members also hold designated responsibilities for wellbeing, safeguarding and mental health support.

### **Governors**

Provide strategic oversight, monitor wellbeing priorities and ensure appropriate policies, support and resources are in place.

### **Senior Leadership Team**

Responsible for promoting a positive whole-school culture, prioritising wellbeing, allocating resources and monitoring this policy.

### **Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead**

Responsible for coordinating the school's wellbeing approach, offering guidance and signposting, and supporting whole-school practice.

**Current post holder:** Carmel Wraight

### **Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)**

Responsible for responding to safeguarding concerns linked to pupil wellbeing or mental health, in line with school procedures.

### **Current DSL team:**

Rachel Carli, Daniela Barzanti, Chrissy Fiorentino, Kay Khing, Jamie Thaxton, Ben Betterton and John Ryan.

### **Mental Health First Aiders**

Provide an initial point of contact for staff needing support, guidance or signposting. They do not replace professional services.

### **Current trained staff:**

Daniela Barzanti, Rachel Carli, Kay Khing, Carmel Wraight, Chrissy Fiorentino, Marina Chrisostomou, David Hancox, Gabriela Teneva, Sabry Said, Marios Demosthenous.

### **All Staff**

All staff are expected to:

- promote positive wellbeing and respectful relationships
- identify concerns and report them appropriately
- follow safeguarding procedures
- contribute to a supportive working environment
- seek support when needed for themselves or others

## **Whole school achievements and Kitemarks**

### **Sandwell Wellbeing Chartermark**

Durants School has achieved the Sandwell Whole School Wellbeing Chartermark, a nationally recognised award that reflects the school's commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across the whole school community.

This recognition demonstrates the school's ongoing commitment to improving wellbeing for pupils, staff and families, and acknowledges strong practice across key areas including:

- leadership and school culture
- ethos and environment
- curriculum, teaching and learning
- pupil voice
- targeted support and early intervention
- staff development and wellbeing
- identifying needs and providing support
- monitoring impact
- partnership working with parents and carers

The award reflects the school's whole-school approach to wellbeing and continuous improvement. Feedback gathered during the accreditation process highlighted positive relationships, open communication, supportive staff, pupil pride in their achievements and tailored experiences that meet individual needs. Durants School remains committed to building on this work and continuing to develop wellbeing provision for all members of the school community.

### **Enfield Trauma Informed Practice in Schools and Settings (E-TIPSS)**

Durants School is committed to providing a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where pupils feel understood, supported and ready to learn. Our approach recognises that behaviour is a form of communication and that children and young people learn best when relationships, consistency and emotional wellbeing are prioritised.

Durants School is part of the Enfield Trauma Informed Practice in Schools and Settings (E-TIPSS) partnership. This borough-wide initiative supports schools to implement trauma-informed approaches through the Attachment, Regulation and Competency (ARC) Framework, providing a consistent structure, shared language and approach across educational settings.

E-TIPSS principles are embedded through our daily routines, school environment, curriculum, policies and communication with pupils, families, staff and the wider community.

Durants School has demonstrated a clear commitment to developing trauma-informed practice and has achieved the E-TIPSS Silver Award. The school is continuing to develop this work and is progressing towards the E-TIPSS Gold Award.

### **Enfield Inclusion charter**

We are an Enfield Inclusion Champion School. Signing the Inclusion Charter is a commitment to:

Provide clear, visible and strong leadership for inclusion

Ensure that everyone takes responsibility for including children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities

Understand that all behaviour happens for a reason

Listen and respond to children and young people's opinions and ideas when making any decision which impacts on their lives

Celebrate difference and diversity

Work with families, professionals and practitioners across our community to help all children and young people to thrive

Ensure that everyone is comfortable to be open and honest about what support they need to help children and young people with their care

Support children and young people to prepare for their adulthood from the early years and throughout their childhood and adolescence, so they can shape their future in the way they want.

## **Pupil wellbeing**

Durants School is committed to promoting the emotional wellbeing, mental health and resilience of all pupils. We recognise that wellbeing is fundamental to learning, behaviour, communication, relationships and personal development.

We aim to create a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where pupils feel understood, valued and supported.

### **How We Promote Positive Wellbeing (Universal Support)**

Positive wellbeing is promoted through everyday practice, including:

- positive relationships with trusted adults
- consistent routines and predictable environments
- communication-friendly classrooms
- PSHE and emotional literacy teaching
- Zones of Regulation and self-regulation support
- sensory supports and calm spaces
- movement breaks and physical activity
- healthy eating and access to Magic Breakfast
- celebrating success, effort and strengths
- friendship and social development support
- pupil voice and choice-making opportunities
- preparation for change and safe transitions

### **Targeted Support**

Some pupils may require additional support at times. This may include:

- check-ins with trusted adults
- individual wellbeing plans
- social stories
- reduced timetable arrangements where appropriate
- safe spaces during periods of distress
- family support work
- counselling or therapeutic input
- referrals to MYME, CAMHS, SCAN or other services
- risk assessments where required
- multi-agency working

### **Recognising When a Pupil May Need Help**

Staff remain alert to changes which may indicate a pupil requires support, including:

- changes in mood or presentation
- withdrawal from others
- increased anxiety
- distress around routines or transitions
- increased dysregulation or aggression
- tiredness or sleepiness
- reduced engagement
- increased sensory sensitivities
- changes in eating habits
- decline in attendance
- reduced confidence or self-esteem
- regressive behaviours
- expressions of hopelessness
- self-harm concerns
- safeguarding worries

### **How Staff Respond to Concerns**

Where concerns arise, staff will:

- notice, record and share concerns promptly
- speak with relevant leads or DSLs
- discuss concerns with parents/carers where appropriate
- assess support needs
- implement strategies and adjustments
- monitor progress
- refer to external agencies where required
- follow safeguarding procedures immediately where risk is present

Information relating to wellbeing concerns will be handled sensitively and shared on a need-to-know basis, in line with safeguarding and data protection requirements.

### **Attendance and Emotional Based School Avoidance**

We recognise that regular attendance is important for learning, wellbeing, routine and social development. We also understand that some pupils may experience barriers to attendance linked to anxiety, emotional wellbeing, sensory needs or other underlying factors.

Where attendance becomes a concern, we aim to identify causes early and work closely with pupils, families and professionals.

**Support may include:**

- regular communication with home
- meetings with pupils and families
- reassurance from trusted adults
- phased or gradual returns

- personalised start times where appropriate
- temporary reduced timetables
- support with transport or collection where possible
- safe spaces and check-ins
- sensory or classroom adjustments
- pastoral or therapeutic support
- external referrals where appropriate

Our approach is supportive and solution-focused. The priority is to help pupils feel safe, confident and able to access education successfully.

### **Behaviour Support / Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)**

Durants School is committed to promoting, embedding and maintaining the principles of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS). We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and that pupils may express anxiety, distress, confusion or unmet need through their behaviour.

The aim of PBS is to improve quality of life, increase independence and reduce behaviours of concern through proactive, positive and person-centred approaches.

All pupils will have support strategies appropriate to need, which may include:

- Positive Behaviour Support Plans
- risk assessments where required
- identified triggers and early warning signs
- proactive regulation strategies
- communication supports
- sensory adjustments
- consistent responses from staff
- personalised rewards and motivators
- de-escalation strategies
- post-incident reflection and review

Plans will be developed in partnership with parents/carers and relevant professionals and reviewed regularly.

Where a pupil has identified mental health needs or involvement from external agencies, this will be reflected within support planning where appropriate.

This policy should be read alongside the school Behaviour Policy and PBS Policy.

### **Managing Change and Transitions**

We recognise that many pupils can find change difficult. Changes to routine, staffing, classrooms, friendships or home circumstances can create anxiety and dysregulation.

We therefore plan carefully to support transitions and reduce uncertainty wherever possible.

Transitions may include:

- joining the school
- moving class or key stage
- returning after absence
- changes in staffing
- changes at home
- moving to a new placement
- preparing for college, adulthood or employment

### **Support strategies may include:**

- visual timetables
- countdowns to change
- transition booklets or photo books
- social stories
- visits to new classrooms or settings
- phased transitions
- extra check-ins with trusted adults
- personalised transition plans
- temporary timetable adjustments
- home-school communication during periods of change

- familiar staff accompanying pupils
- opportunities to ask questions and rehearse routines

We work closely with families, previous settings, receiving settings and relevant professionals to ensure transitions are carefully planned and supportive.

### **Therapy and Specialist Support**

Durants School recognises that some pupils benefit from specialist therapeutic support to promote communication, emotional wellbeing, regulation and engagement in learning.

Therapeutic provision may be delivered directly, through commissioned services or in partnership with external professionals, depending on identified need.

### **Therapy and support may include:**

#### **Speech and Language Therapy**

Supports pupils to develop communication, interaction, understanding, expressive language and functional communication skills. Therapists work collaboratively with staff to embed strategies across the school day.

#### **Occupational Therapy**

Where appropriate, Occupational Therapy may support sensory processing, motor development, independence, regulation and access to learning.

#### **Music Therapy**

Where appropriate, pupils may access music therapy to support communication, emotional expression, engagement and wellbeing.

#### **Dog Therapy / Animal-Assisted Intervention**

Animal-assisted interventions may be used to promote confidence, calmness, communication and emotional regulation.

#### **Mental Health and Emotional Support**

The school may also work with counsellors, CAMHS, MYME, SCAN and other professionals where appropriate.

All therapeutic provision is planned according to pupil need, reviewed regularly and integrated into wider support plans where relevant.

## **Wellbeing – Staff**

Durants School is committed to promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff. The school recognises that staff wellbeing is essential to maintaining a positive, safe and effective learning environment.

The school will support staff wellbeing through the following commitments:

### **Health and Safety**

The school will maintain a safe working environment in line with Health and Safety procedures and relevant legislation.

### **Equality and Respect**

All staff will be treated fairly and with respect. The school will promote dignity at work and challenge bullying, harassment or discrimination.

### **Inclusion and Religious Observance**

Reasonable consideration will be given to requests relating to religious observance, where operationally possible.

### **Smoking**

Durants School is a smoke-free site. Smoking, including vaping, is not permitted on school premises.

### **Staff Facilities**

The school aims to provide staff with access to appropriate facilities for breaks, refreshments and meals where available.

### **Workload Review**

The school will regularly review workload and reduce unnecessary tasks, duplication and avoidable pressures where possible.

**Protected PPA / Administration Time**

PPA time and allocated administration time will be protected wherever possible. Where disrupted due to operational need, reasonable efforts will be made to rearrange or return this time as soon as practicable.

**Meeting Review**

Meetings will be reviewed regularly to ensure they are purposeful, relevant and time-efficient.

**Email Boundaries**

Healthy boundaries around out-of-hours emails and communication will be promoted. Staff are not expected to routinely respond outside working hours unless urgent or previously agreed.

**Safe Working Practices**

Staff working directly with pupils will receive relevant training, guidance and support to promote safe practice, behaviour support and risk reduction. Staff are encouraged to seek support where required.

**Mentoring and Peer Support**

Staff may be offered mentoring, coaching or peer support where appropriate, particularly during induction, new roles or periods of challenge.

**Open Door Policy**

Staff are encouraged to raise concerns, ideas or seek support from leaders and line managers through an open and approachable culture.

**Support Following Incidents**

Following significant incidents, staff will be offered opportunities to debrief, reflect and access support where needed.

**Sickness and Absence Support**

Absence will be managed fairly and sensitively, with appropriate support for staff returning to work following illness or stress.

**Staff Voice**

The school values staff views and will gather feedback through surveys, consultation, meetings and a staff suggestion book.

**Recognition and Achievement**

Staff contributions will be recognised and celebrated through assemblies, meetings and internal communication. This may include weekly or termly recognition such as Staff of the Week, Staff of the Term and celebration of individual or team achievements.

**Wellbeing Activities and Social Events**

The school may promote wellbeing activities and opportunities across the year to support morale and positive staff relationships. Examples have included quizzes, art activities, yoga sessions, wellbeing days, bring-a-dish events, Christmas socials and staff sports day.

**Staff Wellbeing Information**

Relevant wellbeing information, resources and updates may be displayed in the staff room and shared through internal communication.

**Induction**

New staff will receive induction including wellbeing support, safeguarding systems, key policies and sources of help.

**Training on Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Appropriate training and awareness opportunities will be provided to support understanding of mental health, wellbeing and stress management.

**Professional Development**

The school is committed to supporting staff development through relevant training, career progression and professional learning opportunities where possible.



### **Health and Lifestyle Benefits**

Where available, staff will be signposted to relevant employee discounts, wellbeing schemes or lifestyle benefits.

### **Support for Staff Experiencing Difficulties**

Staff experiencing stress, wellbeing concerns or unhappiness at work are encouraged to seek support early, usually through their line manager in the first instance. Additional support may be provided where appropriate.

### **Shared Staff Responsibilities**

Staff are expected to:

- communicate respectfully and professionally
- raise concerns through appropriate channels
- contribute positively to solutions where possible
- support colleagues
- report if unfit to carry out duties
- help maintain a safe, welcoming and professional environment

## **Wellbeing for parents and carers**

We recognise that families play a vital role in the emotional wellbeing, development and success of children and young people.

Durants School is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to promote wellbeing and provide joined-up support.

This may include:

- regular communication between home and school
- updates and celebration of progress through ClassDojo and other communication systems
- listening to family views and concerns
- involving families in planning and review meetings
- supporting attendance and transitions
- sharing strategies that support wellbeing at home and school
- ensuring families know who to contact in school for advice or support, including Sammy Hartley
- sharing information about wellbeing local support services through emails, ClassDojo, and newsletters and the school website
- signposting or referring families to parenting support, workshops or community services
- making reasonable adjustments to help families access meetings or support where possible
- gathering feedback through an annual parent/carers survey to help inform school development
- celebrating progress and achievements together
- providing practical support where appropriate

We recognise that families may also require support at times and will seek to work compassionately, consistently and collaboratively.

## **Signposting**

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services. Within the school (noticeboards, common rooms, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, ClassDojo and websites), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.