

Health and Wellbeing Policy



Reviewed/Updated	Date
Updated	August 2026
Review	August 2029

<u>Signed:</u>	<u>Signed:</u>
Chair of Board of Governors	Principal

School Vision, Policy Aims and Ethos

At Crawfordsburn Primary School, our Health and Wellbeing Policy is founded on our shared vision of nurturing caring, creative and confident individuals within a supportive whole-school community. We believe that wellbeing flourishes when every pupil, member of staff and family feels valued, safe and cared for. By promoting a strong family ethos where pupils, staff and the wider school community learn to care for themselves, one another and the world around them, we aim to create a culture of positive relationships, emotional safety and mutual respect.

Our emphasis on creativity encourages all members of our community to think openly, solve problems collaboratively and engage in learning and school life with confidence and resilience. Through celebrating success and offering meaningful opportunities for pupils and staff to contribute their voice, we aim to strengthen self-esteem and cultivate a sense of belonging. This policy reflects our belief that the health and wellbeing of every individual (children, staff and families) is essential to a thriving learning environment and underpins our commitment to developing a happy, confident and compassionate school community.

Rationale

‘Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It has intrinsic and instrumental value and is integral to our well-being’ (World Health Organisation).

In recent years, increasing concerns have been raised around the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. Research funded by the office of the Mental Health Champion for Northern Ireland in 2023 found that 45.2% of 16-year-olds in Northern Ireland have probable mental ill-health (female 52.9%, males 32.8%) while the wellbeing of 11-year-olds in NI had also declined in recent years to its lowest ever score since 2016.

At Crawfordsburn Primary School we believe that happy children are better learners and that positive health and wellbeing is linked to better educational outcomes. This is in line with The Department of Education for Northern Ireland’s vision for ‘every child and young person [to be] happy, learning and succeeding’ (Corporate Plan 2023-28).

We also recognise that there is direct correlation between the wellbeing of our staff and the wellbeing of our pupils. It is essential that all staff feel part of a valued team and that they:

- Have the opportunity to express their views;
- Have their suggestions for improvements taken seriously;
- Are supported to manage their workload within a culture that promotes a healthy work-life balance.

Introduction

A whole school approach to Emotional Health and Wellbeing involves a school leadership who:

- Understand the links between mental health and achievement;
- Champion and support emotional health and wellbeing for pupils and staff, both strategically and practically as a part of improvement planning;
- Rely on a staff team committed to helping all pupils develop the essential social and emotional skills they need to cope effectively.

We believe that emotional health and wellbeing usually means that someone is happy, healthy and safe.

Roles and Responsibilities

While the Board of Governors have a responsibility to support the development of emotional health and wellbeing within our school, we believe that every member of our school community has a role to play in promoting the positive emotional health and wellbeing of all.

The Board of Governors will:

- Ensure this policy is implemented and procedures are in place that recognise and deal with the issue of common mental and physical health problems.
- Aim to create an environment where staff feel comfortable in asking for help.
- Enlist the support of EA's HR Department and Occupational Health, where applicable, and ensure that staff are able to access this support.

The Principal will:

- Recognise the value of good management practice with systems in place to effectively manage staff.
- Foster a supportive work environment, operating in a fair and consistent manner.
- Promote a healthy workplace with practices that ensure that members of staff are able to develop a healthy mind.
- Pay attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour in staff and promote sympathetic alertness to staff who show signs of being under stress.
- Understand the differing needs of staff, at different points and events during their life cycles, and offer support accordingly, if and when required. This may include support for pregnant women, women during the menopause, and those with caring responsibilities.
- Follow agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work related stress and other mental-health problems.
- Enlist the support of EA's HR Department and Occupational Health, where applicable, and ensure that staff are able to access this support.

Staff will:

- Seek support or help when they think they are experiencing a problem.
- Act in a manner that respects the health and safety needs of themselves or others whilst in the workplace.
- Consider wellbeing support mechanisms offered by the Education Authority e.g. counselling.
- Where possible, be watchful of any indication of changes of behaviour in colleagues and promote sympathetic alertness to colleagues who show signs of stress.

Support for Pupils

Our whole school approach to emotional health and wellbeing ensures the provision of a variety of services to support pupils. It includes the curriculum, extra-curricular provision, pastoral care, SEN provision, early intervention and targeted support. We understand that by intervening early to provide support before difficulties escalate, there will be a reduction in the number of emotional health and wellbeing problems in our school.

Examples of Emotional Health and Wellbeing strategies and activities:

- Pupil-led activities.
- Transition support.
- Class and small group activities.
- Whole-school assemblies and events.
- Teaching about Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing
- Use of a daily Mood Tracker.
- Promoting participation in local projects.
- Promotion of Global/Regional Mental Health events.

**If a pupil is identified as at risk, the school's child protection procedures should be followed.*

Support for Staff

At Crawfordsburn Primary School we believe that staff wellbeing is essential for cultivating an emotionally healthy school. We recognise that our staff are our most important resource and are committed to promoting positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing for all members of staff. Our staff are valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally within a caring, nurturing and purposeful learning community.

We aim to provide a work environment where staff wellbeing is supported and staff are enabled to carry out their duties effectively. We also encourage staff as individuals to accept responsibility for their own mental, physical and emotional wellbeing by developing an open culture in which mental, physical and emotional wellbeing is taken seriously and in which staff are supported in order that they may seek any help and support they need.

Examples of Support:

Provision of professional learning opportunities for staff.

Celebration of success.

Collaborative learning communities (both within our school and with other schools).

Support Mechanisms for staff:

Counselling

Lena (by Inspire) provides a confidential and independent counselling service for all staff that is available at any time.

Staff can access this service by telephoning 0808 800 0002

People Services Team

The People Services Team can be contacted by telephoning the EAaskHR Helpdesk on 02890470555.

Occupational Health

Occupational Health is a specialist branch of medicine that focuses on the physical and mental wellbeing of employees in the workplace.

The purpose of an Occupational Health appointment is to establish an independent view on an employee's medical fitness for the job in which he/she is employed, or for a job to which they may potentially be employed. In addition, the employer may need to seek independent medical guidance in relation to staff support, staff adjustments and/or rehabilitation programmes including circumstances where an employee may have a disability and requires specific support. It is the principal's role to initiate a request to the Employing Authority for a referral to an Occupational Health Clinician when it is appropriate to do so. The Chair of Governors can perform this duty for Principal referrals.

The manager may require information from the Occupational Health specialist as a proactive step in supporting their employees to remain in work or where an employee is absent and requires additional support to return to work. In all cases, guidance from the HR People Services team is provided to support next steps.

Support for Parents/Carers

We believe that Parent/Carer engagement is vital because working together has been shown to have a promising impact on the wellbeing of all. We aim to provide opportunities for school and home to work together through:

- Regular home-school communication.
- Consultation with parents.
- Parent events.
- Clear pathways of support and links to support networks.
- Engaging with voluntary, community and statutory agencies.