Cyfarthfa High School

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Emotional and Mental Well-being Policy

POLICY DATE

September 2026

SCHEDULED REVIEW

September 2027

Policy Lead

Lee-Anne McCarthy | Lead Practitioner Safeguarding & Wellbeing

Approval date 08.10.26

Approval

Role	Name and signature	Date
Chair of Governors	D. Williams	08.10.26
Headteacher	B. Davies	08.10.26
Designated SLT member	L. McCarthy	08.10.26

Emotional and Mental Well-being Policy

Whole-school approach | September 2026 | Review September 2027

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1. Vision and ethos

At Cyfarthfa High School, we believe that emotional and mental well-being is fundamental to successful learning, positive relationships, attendance, behaviour and achievement.

Our vision is to create and sustain a positive school environment in which every pupil is known, supported and valued and has access to the resources and opportunities needed to thrive physically, academically, socially and emotionally.

Emotional and mental well-being is a whole-school responsibility. Pupils, staff, parents and carers and external agencies work together to identify need, build resilience, remove barriers and provide appropriate support.

Our approach is based upon the principle that support should be available at the right level, at the right time, with opportunities for early identification and intervention before difficulties escalate.

Our ethos is based on mutual respect, safety, honesty, trust and increasing responsibility. We aim to be a purposeful and welcoming school in which pupils and adults feel valued, can learn and work together, and have their achievements recognised.

Positive emotional and mental well-being supports participation, relationships, learning and resilience. Physical health and emotional well-being are closely connected, and our approach considers both across the school community.

2. Policy context and children's rights

This policy brings together Cyfarthfa High School's approach and the Local Authority's whole-school policy model. It is underpinned by the Welsh Government Framework on Embedding a Whole-School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being (2021) and should be read alongside relevant Welsh legislation and guidance, including Curriculum for Wales, the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, the ALN Code for Wales, the Equality Act 2010 and statutory safeguarding guidance.

Our core values are belonging, efficacy and having a voice: members of the school community should feel included, able to influence their lives and learning, and listened to. The approach is grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), particularly participation and the aims of education.

UNCRC articles	**Relevance to our approach**
1 and 2	Children's rights apply without discrimination.
3	The child's best interests are a primary consideration.
12	Pupils' views are heard and given due weight.
19 and 34	Protection from violence, abuse, neglect and sexual exploitation.
28 and 29	Education respects dignity and develops personality, talents and abilities.
42	Children and adults should know about children's rights.

It should be read alongside the school's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;

- Attendance Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- ALN Policy;
- RSE Policy;
- Equality Policy.

This policy also links to the school's Health and Safety, Assessment, Marking and Feedback, Curriculum, Healthcare Needs and relevant staff and HR policies and procedures.

3. Aims

Cyfarthfa High School aims to create an environment which promotes positive emotional and mental well-being for all members of the school community.

We aim to develop pupils' resilience, confidence and emotional literacy; establish strong relationships between pupils and trusted adults; identify emerging needs early; make it easy for pupils to ask for help; provide appropriate universal and targeted support; work effectively with families and external agencies; and ensure that pupils requiring specialist support are identified and referred appropriately.

We recognise that well-being is influenced by a wide range of factors. Our approach therefore considers the whole child, including emotional, social, physical and academic needs and the wider circumstances which may affect a pupil's ability to thrive.

We will create safe opportunities for pupils to express themselves, keep their welfare central to decisions, involve pupils and families appropriately, and review support with them.

4. Whole-school curriculum

The curriculum supports the four purposes of Curriculum for Wales, including developing healthy, confident individuals. The Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience helps pupils understand their emotions, develop healthy relationships and respond to life's opportunities and challenges.

PSE, tutorial provision, assemblies and learning across subjects develop emotional literacy, resilience, help-seeking and respect for others. RSE is planned in accordance with the statutory RSE Code and the school's RSE Policy, with content appropriate to learners' development and needs.

Physical activity, outdoor learning, creative experiences and opportunities for cooperation contribute to pupils' well-being. Curriculum content and teaching approaches will respond to pupil voice, survey findings and identified needs.

5. School environment

Classrooms, corridors, outdoor spaces, dining areas, communal areas and toilets should contribute to pupils' safety, dignity and sense of belonging. Displays, resources and daily interactions should reflect inclusive and supportive practice.

Access to outdoor spaces and physical activity supports well-being. The school will consider sensory, social and physical barriers when planning the environment and making reasonable adjustments.

Where identified needs require it, staff will agree access to an appropriate safe, private and calming space, including relevant Student Support/ALN Hub arrangements. These arrangements will identify appropriate supervision, support and review, taking account of safeguarding and the pupil's views.

Well-being will be considered throughout the school day, including arrival, lessons, transitions, breaks, lunch and departure.

6. Our Graduated Model of Well-being Support

Cyfarthfa High School operates a graduated model of provision:

Level	Purpose
Universal	Support positive well-being and belonging for every pupil.
Targeted	Provide additional support and adjustments matched to identified need.
Specialist	Access appropriate external expertise while maintaining school support.

The level of support offered is determined by the individual needs and circumstances of the pupil rather than by diagnosis alone.

Movement between levels is flexible. Pupils may require different levels of support at different points in their school journey.

The school's detailed Wellbeing Provision Map identifies the interventions, services and referral pathways currently available at each level.

7. Universal Provision – Supporting Every Pupil

Our universal provision aims to establish a school environment which actively promotes positive well-being and prevents difficulties wherever possible.

Every pupil has access to regular contact with their form tutor, curriculum-based PSE provision and opportunities to develop positive relationships with trusted adults. The school also uses tutorial provision, assemblies, awareness activities and wider curriculum opportunities to develop understanding of mental health, relationships, resilience and well-being.

Universal provision also includes opportunities to recognise achievement, develop belonging and remove practical barriers to participation.

Our provision therefore extends beyond traditional mental-health interventions. For example, practical support is available to pupils experiencing financial barriers through initiatives such as uniform provision, while adaptations can be made for pupils experiencing anxiety or sensory difficulties.

All staff contribute to universal provision through the relationships, expectations and environments they create.

8. Identifying Need

Early identification is central to our approach.

Concerns about a pupil's emotional and mental well-being may be identified through:

- the school's termly well-being survey;
- pupil self-referral;
- conversations with trusted adults;
- form tutor or staff observations;
- parent/carer concerns;

• attendance information;

• behaviour information;

• safeguarding information;

• ALN information;

• academic engagement or progress;

• information from external professionals.

The school recognises that changes in behaviour, attendance, engagement, relationships or academic performance can sometimes be indicators of an underlying need.

Information will therefore be considered holistically rather than in isolation.

9. Termly Well-being Survey

All pupils are provided with an opportunity to complete a well-being survey each term.

The survey provides an additional mechanism through which pupils can communicate how they are feeling and enables the school to identify pupils who may be experiencing difficulties.

Appropriate staff review the outcomes and determine whether further conversation, monitoring or intervention may be required.

The survey also allows the school to identify trends across year groups and the wider pupil population, informing curriculum provision, intervention planning and whole-school priorities.

The survey is an early-identification and monitoring tool and is not a clinical diagnostic assessment.

Any information obtained through the survey which raises a safeguarding concern will be responded to through the school's safeguarding procedures.

10. Pupil Self-Referral – S.P.A.C.E.

An important feature of our approach is that pupils do not need to wait for an adult to refer them for support.

S.P.A.C.E. is available as a self-referral service to all pupils through the Wellbeing tab on ClassCharts. Pupils can use this facility when they are finding things difficult and can access individual or group-based support.

This provides pupils with a discreet and accessible route to seek help and supports our aim of developing a culture in which asking for help is viewed positively.

S.P.A.C.E. provides opportunities for pupils to access one-to-one youth worker support, as well as appropriate group activities and signposting.

Pupils will be regularly reminded of how to access this support.

Pupils who need urgent help should speak directly to a trusted adult. Self-referral and surveys do not replace immediate safeguarding or emergency responses.

11. Targeted Well-being Provision

Where universal provision is not sufficient, pupils may access targeted support according to their identified needs.

Our targeted provision includes a range of internal and commissioned interventions. Current examples include ELSA, Flourish and Forest School, alongside individual and group-based youth work and other pastoral interventions.

ELSA provides structured emotional literacy support tailored to individual need, while Flourish focuses on areas including growth mindset and positive thinking. Forest School provides nature-based, learner-led experiences designed to promote positive development and well-being.

Targeted support may also include reasonable adjustments to the pupil's school experience. These can include individual support plans, additional information for staff, access to appropriate safe spaces, time-out arrangements and adaptations to aspects of the school day where these are appropriate to identified need.

Intervention will be matched to identified need rather than simply to the provision available.

The school recognises that needs change over time. Support will be proportionate, reviewed with the pupil and relevant adults, and adjusted when it is not meeting the identified need.

12. Working with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are important partners in supporting pupils' emotional and mental well-being.

Where appropriate, the school will work collaboratively with families to understand concerns, identify strengths and needs, agree appropriate strategies and access additional support.

Parents and carers may contact the school where they have concerns about their child's emotional or mental well-being.

The school may also contact parents or carers when concerns have been identified through staff observations, the well-being survey, self-referral or other information.

Where appropriate, parents and carers may be involved in meetings with school staff or external practitioners. The school's existing provision includes opportunities for parent consultation and family-based support.

Communication will be accessible and respectful. Staff will explain agreed support and review arrangements and keep families appropriately informed, subject to the pupil’s circumstances, safeguarding considerations and lawful information sharing.

13. Specialist and External Support

Cyfarthfa High School recognises the limits of the school's role. School staff are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions or provide specialist therapeutic interventions for which they are not appropriately qualified.

Where needs require expertise beyond the school's internal provision, the school works with external organisations and statutory, health, local authority and third-sector services.

Depending upon identified need and availability, these may include counselling, youth services, health services, family support, bereavement support, substance misuse services, domestic abuse support, neurodevelopmental services and other specialist interventions.

For example, the school's current provision includes Exchange counselling and CBT-based interventions, SHINE support and Youth Service interventions. The wider provision map also identifies specialist pathways for needs including domestic abuse, sexual health and other complex circumstances.

The school's Wellbeing Provision Map will remain the operational record of current services, eligibility criteria and referral pathways so that this policy does not become outdated whenever commissioned services change.

The school will maintain trusted relationships and appropriate school-based support while specialist advice is sought or provided. A referral does not end the school’s responsibility to support the pupil; relevant staff will coordinate with families and professionals and review progress.

14. A Needs-Led Approach

Support will be proportionate to individual need.

A pupil may therefore experience the following pathway:

Step	Action
PROMOTE	Universal provision supports positive well-being for all.
IDENTIFY	Need is identified through the well-being survey, self-referral, staff observation, family information, attendance, behaviour, safeguarding, ALN or another route.
UNDERSTAND	The pupil's voice is sought and available information is considered to understand the underlying need.
SUPPORT	Appropriate targeted support, intervention or reasonable adjustment is identified.
REVIEW	The impact of support is considered with the pupil and relevant adults.
ESCALATE / REFER	Where need cannot appropriately be met within school, specialist advice, external intervention or safeguarding action is sought.

This process is not necessarily linear. The level and urgency of response will always be determined by the needs and safety of the pupil.

15. Pupil Voice and Co-production

Pupil voice is central to our approach.

Pupils should, wherever developmentally appropriate, be involved in identifying their needs and determining what may help them.

Our termly well-being survey and ClassCharts self-referral system provide systematic opportunities for pupils to communicate their needs.

Individual planning should also be undertaken with pupils rather than simply for them. This principle is already reflected within the school's use of extended one-page profiles, which are developed collaboratively with pupils to help staff understand their needs and support engagement and participation.

Pupils will also be involved in evaluating and improving the whole-school approach through representative groups, discussion and feedback, including opportunities for pupils whose views may otherwise be less readily heard.

16. Well-being, Behaviour and Attendance

We recognise the strong relationship between well-being, behaviour, attendance and engagement.

Behaviour that challenges may sometimes communicate an unmet need. Equally, emotional or social difficulties may contribute to reduced attendance, disengagement or difficulties with learning.

Staff should therefore remain curious about the factors contributing to changes in a pupil's presentation.

This does not remove the school's expectations regarding behaviour, attendance or safety. Support and high expectations should work alongside one another.

Where appropriate, information relating to behaviour, attendance, academic progress, ALN and well-being may be considered together when determining support.

17. Inclusion and Additional Learning Needs

Well-being provision will be inclusive and responsive to individual need.

We recognise that some pupils may find it more difficult to identify, communicate or seek support for emotional difficulties.

Appropriate adaptations will therefore be considered for pupils with additional learning needs, disabilities, communication needs, sensory differences or other barriers.

The ALNCo and relevant professionals may contribute to planning where appropriate.

The school's provision includes, for example, access to Student Support/ALN Hub during unstructured times and adaptations to address social, emotional or sensory barriers.

Staff should be alert to the effects of long-term illness, bereavement and loss, family difficulties, bullying and other adverse experiences. The school will work with the relevant lead, ALNCo, families and partner agencies to identify barriers early and coordinate appropriate support, including ALN referral and planning processes where applicable.

18. Safeguarding

Safeguarding takes priority over all well-being intervention processes.

Emotional distress may sometimes be associated with self-harm, suicidal thoughts, abuse, neglect, exploitation, domestic abuse or other risks to a pupil or another person.

Staff must not promise absolute confidentiality. They should explain, in a way the pupil understands, that information may need to be shared with appropriate people to keep the pupil or others safe.

Where information obtained through a well-being survey, S.P.A.C.E., an intervention, conversation or any other route raises a safeguarding concern, staff must follow the school's safeguarding procedures immediately.

A well-being referral or intervention must never be used as an alternative to an appropriate safeguarding response.

Concerns must be reported promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or appropriate deputy in accordance with the school’s safeguarding arrangements. Where there is an immediate risk, staff must follow emergency procedures and obtain urgent assistance without waiting for a well-being referral or review.

19. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information concerning pupils' emotional and mental well-being will be treated sensitively and shared on a need-to-know basis in accordance with safeguarding and data protection requirements.

Pupils accessing support should understand the boundaries of confidentiality.

Appropriate records will be maintained to ensure continuity of support and enable the school to evaluate provision.

Records will be accurate, secure and accessible only to those who need them for their role. Information will be shared lawfully and proportionately, taking account of safeguarding duties, the

pupil's understanding and the circumstances. Confidentiality must not prevent necessary action to protect someone from harm.

20. Staff Role and Professional Boundaries

Every member of staff contributes to the emotional and mental well-being of pupils.

Staff should:

notice → listen → respond → record/refer where necessary.

Staff are not expected to act as counsellors, therapists or mental-health clinicians unless appropriately qualified and employed in that capacity.

Staff should know how pupils can access S.P.A.C.E., targeted interventions, safeguarding support and external services and should seek advice where they are unsure of the appropriate response.

Staff should be aware of changes in pupils' presentation and relevant risk factors, provide opportunities to practise self-care and care for others, and seek advice from the Well-being Lead or a senior leader when unsure. Concerns about colleagues should be handled sensitively through the appropriate management or HR route.

21. Staff Emotional and Mental Well-being

A whole-school approach must also recognise the emotional and mental well-being of staff.

The school will seek to develop a culture in which staff feel valued, supported and able to access appropriate help.

Leaders will recognise the potential emotional impact of supporting pupils experiencing significant difficulties and will seek to ensure that staff have access to appropriate advice, supervision or support where required.

Cyfarthfa High School will take a proactive approach to the causes of workplace stress, anxiety, injury and ill health. Leaders will listen to staff, consider workload and working relationships, and address organisational factors that affect well-being. Self-care will be encouraged alongside practical leadership action.

The school is committed to implementing the principles of the Local Authority Education Workplace Wellbeing Charter through its culture and ethos, guidance and support, policies and practices, and working relationships.

Appropriate support will be provided for staff whose health affects their work, including those with disabilities or health conditions and those returning to work. Targeted and specialist support, occupational health advice and rehabilitation will be accessed through relevant HR procedures.

Staff should be able to raise concerns with their line manager or an appropriate senior leader and be signposted to available support. Leaders will promote healthier working practices and consider staff feedback when reviewing provision.

22. Training and professional learning

Professional learning will support all staff to promote positive emotional and mental well-being, recognise emerging concerns, listen and respond appropriately, understand safeguarding responsibilities and know how to obtain help.

Training priorities will reflect pupil and staff needs, evaluation findings, the School Development Plan and professional development discussions. Delivery may include face-to-face sessions, whole-school training, individual learning and blended approaches.

Staff undertaking specific interventions must have training and competence appropriate to their role. Those delivering ELSA, youth work, counselling or other specialist provision will have access to relevant professional advice, support and supervision. Training does not authorise staff to practise beyond their qualifications or role.

Staff and governors will be supported to use relevant Local Authority professional networks and resources, including Merthyr Tydfil Schools and Governors networks and Hwb resources where available. Governors' learning should support informed oversight and challenge.

The Well-being Lead will coordinate training needs with senior leaders and relevant specialists and keep appropriate records of professional learning.

23. Monitoring Impact

The effectiveness of the school's whole-school approach will be monitored using a range of quantitative and qualitative evidence.

This will include analysis of the termly well-being survey, patterns of S.P.A.C.E. self-referral, uptake and completion of interventions, pupil voice and feedback, attendance and behaviour information, safeguarding trends, parent/carer feedback, staff feedback and information from external providers.

Where appropriate, interventions will establish intended outcomes and consider progress against these at the end of the intervention.

Monitoring should consider not simply "How many pupils received an intervention?" but:

• Did the pupil's situation improve?

• Does the pupil feel better supported?

• Did the intervention reduce the identified barrier?

• Does the pupil know where to seek help in the future?

Findings will inform future provision and whole-school improvement planning.

The Governing Body and leadership team will review the whole-school approach through the school's self-evaluation cycle. Priorities will inform the School Development Plan, with progress monitored regularly and reported to governors. Evaluation will include staff well-being and whether provision is accessible and effective for different pupil groups.

24. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

The Governing Body provides strategic oversight, support and challenge. It will monitor implementation, promote an ethos that supports well-being, educational achievement and positive behaviour, and consider whether leadership, resources and professional learning enable effective provision. It will identify a governor with responsibility for health and well-being oversight and record this within governor responsibilities.

Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team establish a culture in which well-being is integral to learning, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and achievement. They will consider the well-being impact of policies and practices, including homework and expectations across the school day, encourage pupil collaboration and feedback, and engage parents and carers as partners. They are responsible for timely staff support and addressing factors contributing to workplace stress.

Well-being Lead — Lee-Anne McCarthy

Lee-Anne McCarthy, Lead Practitioner for Safeguarding and Wellbeing, leads and coordinates the whole-school approach. The lead works with curriculum and pastoral staff to develop provision and learning about well-being, advises staff, coordinates professional learning, evaluates impact and maintains the Wellbeing Provision Map. The lead also coordinates liaison and appropriate referral arrangements with external services, working with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, ALNCo and other relevant staff.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead ensures that concerns relating to risk or harm are responded to in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

ALNCo

The ALNCo contributes to identifying and responding to well-being needs associated with additional learning needs, supports relevant referral and planning processes, and ensures appropriate adaptations and provision.

Pastoral, youth work and intervention staff

Pastoral staff, youth workers and intervention staff provide support within their professional roles, maintain appropriate records, review progress and escalate concerns where necessary.

Form tutors and all staff

Form tutors provide regular opportunities to check in, identify changes and develop relationships in which pupils can regard them as trusted adults. All staff contribute to a safe, respectful and supportive environment, understand relevant referral arrangements and respond appropriately when a pupil or colleague seeks help.

Pupils, parents and carers

Pupils will be supported to express their views, participate in planning and review, and seek help for themselves or others. Parents and carers are encouraged to share concerns, contribute to support planning and work with the school to review progress.

25. Wellbeing Provision Map

The school's Wellbeing Provision Map forms an important operational document supporting this policy.

It identifies provision across the school's Universal, Targeted and Specialist levels and provides staff with information about available interventions and referral pathways.

The provision map will be reviewed and updated regularly because services, external providers, eligibility criteria and referral arrangements may change.

The policy therefore establishes the principles governing our approach, while the Wellbeing Provision Map provides the current operational detail of how support is accessed.

The map will also identify responsible contacts, how support is requested, how interventions are reviewed and how staff obtain current referral information. Provision will be updated when services or arrangements change.

26. Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly and in response to:

- changes in Welsh Government guidance;
- evaluation of well-being provision;
- termly well-being survey findings;
- pupil and parent/carer voice;
- safeguarding, attendance and behaviour trends;
- changes in local or specialist services;
- school improvement priorities.

The scheduled review is September 2027. The Governing Body will consider and approve significant amendments. Lee-Anne McCarthy will coordinate the review with relevant staff, pupils, parents/carers and governors.

Reference documents

Welsh Government (2021), Framework on embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being. Current publication page: https://www.gov.wales/framework-embedding-whole-school-approach-emotional-and-mental-wellbeing

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Full text: https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text

Local Authority Whole School Approach to Emotional & Mental Well-being Policy (Spring 2024), read alongside Cyfarthfa High School's Wellbeing Provision Map and the linked school policies.