



SIKH ACADEMIES TRUST  
Faith Inspired Education

# **SAT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY**

Updated by DfE in July 2025

## 1. Principles of a whole school approach

The Department for Education (DfE) and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities published guidance on the [8 principles of a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing](#). These are:

- an ethos and environment that promotes respect, and values diversity
- leadership and management that supports and champions efforts to promote emotional health and wellbeing
- staff development to support their own wellbeing and that of pupils and learners
- curriculum teaching and learning to promote resilience and support social and emotional learning
- enabling student voice to influence decisions
- identifying the need for and monitoring the impact of interventions
- targeted support and appropriate referral
- working with parents and carers

## 2. Identifying SAT senior mental health lead

Schools decide who is best placed to take on the role of senior mental health lead.

## 3. Resources for developing a whole school approach

The [mental health lead resource hub](#) was developed by DfE in partnership with education representatives and mental health experts to help mental health leads in their role. It includes evidence-based practical resources and tools for schools and colleges.

The [targeted support toolkit](#) helps schools review, refresh and develop targeted support for learners with mental health or social and emotional wellbeing needs.

Resources are available for staff, parents and carers to [support attendance and mental wellbeing in schools and colleges](#).

[Teaching blog](#) includes posts from teachers which can be filtered to find information about student and staff mental health.

[Psychological first aid training](#) supports children and young people's mental health during emergencies and crisis situations.

## 4. Staff wellbeing and development

Teachers and leaders can access support for their own wellbeing and to address challenges around workload.

The [education staff wellbeing charter](#) is a declaration of support for, and a set of commitments to, the wellbeing and mental health of everyone working in education. It directs education staff to mental health and wellbeing resources. Guidance developed with school leaders to [improve workload and wellbeing for school staff](#) is available. It has free resources including a workload reduction toolkit and resources to help track and evaluate the impact of workload reduction measures.

Other relevant professional development available includes:

- [national professional qualifications \(NPGs\)](#) - funded courses for state schools and state-funded 16 to 19 organisations
- [NPQ for leading behaviour and culture](#) for teachers who want to create and maintain a culture of good behaviour and high expectations in which staff and pupils thrive
- A [mental wellbeing training module](#) is available to support the teaching of mental wellbeing as a part of the curriculum.

## 5. Information for parents, carers, teachers, pupils and learners

The [education hub](#) provides links to organisations that offer mental health support.

## 6. Overview

Sikh Academies Trust (the “Trust”) are committed to supporting the positive mental health and wellbeing of our whole community of children, staff, parents and carers. SAT has a [wellbeing charter](#) for staff that is centred around our values and sikh ethos.

We encourage our staff and children to learn through experience and our dedicated staff ensure that children of all abilities have equal opportunities to thrive. The Trust are the guardians of the school’s ethos of providing an education which hones both academic and personal skills within the Sikh ethos as the basis for a successful and fulfilling life.

The Trust understand how important wellbeing is to our lives. The Trust recognises that staff and children’s health is a vital factor in their overall wellbeing and how it can affect their learning and achievement. The Trust encourages staff and children to be open and have their voices heard.

The Trust maintain a healthy environment for pupils and staff by:

- Promoting the Trust values, and encouraging a sense of belonging and community;
- Providing opportunities to develop self-worth;
- Valuing each pupil for who they are;
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements;
- Supporting children to have their say and participate in decision-making;
- Raising awareness amongst staff about early warning signs and symptoms of mental health issues;
- Supporting staff who are struggling with their own mental health concerns.

The Trust recognises the importance of supporting wellbeing to the whole Trust community. This Policy outlines the Trust approach and commitment to promoting and supporting positive mental health and wellbeing in the school community.

## 1. Children

Building children’s confidence and self-esteem in a safe environment is vital to positive mental health and successful learning outcomes.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that *“in order to help their children succeed, schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy”*. The Trust Schools are a place for children to experience a nurturing and supportive environment. They support the children to develop their self-esteem and build resilience. The Trust understands all children and their families go through

ups and downs, and some face significant life events. The Trust knows that anyone in the community may need additional support to cope with life's challenges.

The Trust's culture of nurturing children and building resilience means the schools are a safe place where:

- Every child feels valued;
- Every child has a sense of belonging;
- Every child feels able to talk openly with trusted members of staff about their concerns;
- Positive mental health is promoted;
- Bullying is not tolerated.

In our schools we want all children to:

- Understand their emotions and experiences;
- Form and maintain friendships and relationships;
- Be able to express a range of emotions appropriately;
- Develop resilience and cope with setbacks;
- Manage the stresses of everyday life and be able to deal with change;
- Learn and achieve.

### **Mental health concerns in children**

Short term stress is a normal part of life and many issues can be experienced as mild or transitory challenges for some children and their families. Others will experience more serious and longer lasting effects.

The same experience can have different effects on different children depending on other factors in their life. For example, it is normal for children to feel nervous or under stress around exam times, but other factors can make such stress part of an enduring and persistent mental health concern for some children.

When a concern is particularly severe or persistent over time, or when a number of these difficulties are experienced at the same time, children are often described as experiencing mental health concerns.

All staff should also be aware that health concerns can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health concern. Non-professional diagnoses, however well meant, can exacerbate or promote mental health concern.

Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behavior suggests that they may be experiencing a concern or be at risk of developing one.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy and speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Headteacher.

If a child or staff member presents a medical emergency then relevant procedures must be followed, including involving the emergency services.

## **Promoting and Supporting Children's Positive Mental Health**

The Trust Schools promote positive mental health and we aim to prevent mental health concerns through our developed range of activities and strategies including:

- Class activities – certificates and house points/awards; circle time; worry box.
- Transition programme – activities (including safety, citizenship and first aid) to support Year 6 children moving onto secondary school.
- Whole School initiatives – assemblies; School Council; Young Leaders; challenges to promote healthy minds (e.g. Walking to School Week); treats with the Headteacher; displays and information around School.

Throughout the School's PD programme, we teach social and emotional skills to develop the children's confidence and resilience.

## **Identifying and supporting children with mental health needs**

The Trust approach is to encourage and support children to express themselves and be listened to in a safe environment.

All staff have a responsibility to facilitate and support positive mental health. The Trust aim to spot the early warning signs of mental health issues and to identify appropriate support for the children based on their needs. The Trust involve parents and carers wherever possible and also the children themselves in the care and support they need in School.

The Trust take a whole-community approach towards the mental health of our pupils. Our aim is to support the whole family, if possible, but we recognise that we are teachers not mental health professionals. This means regular communication with parents explaining our concerns if appropriate and giving parents guidance about who they can talk to about their children's mental health concerns. The Trust involve parents and carers, advise parents to engage the services of professionals if required, and work with professional partners and agencies where necessary.

## **Disclosures by children of mental health concerns**

Our schools recognise the importance of staff remaining calm, supportive and non-judgmental with children who disclose a concern. Staff should make it clear to the children that the concern will be shared with the DSL to help them and get the support they need. Staff understand they need to listen, not advise.

## **Interventions and Support**

All concerns are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) are recorded. The DSL assesses the level of need to ensure the child gets the appropriate support from within Schools or from an external health professional. The Trust aim to put early interventions in place wherever possible and to prevent concerns escalating.

Following an assessment by the DSL:

- a plan will be put in place setting out how the pupil will be supported;
- action needed to provide that support; and
- regular reviews to assess the effectiveness of the provision and changes made where necessary.

The Trust has access to a range of specialist services including an in-house school counsellor. The children and their parents or carers are involved, and if appropriate put in place support for their friends/peers in School. The Trust makes every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate.

## **2. Staff wellbeing**

The Trust has developed a set of management standards which cover the primary sources of stress at work, and that if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and wellbeing, lower productivity and increased sickness absence. These are:

- **Demands:** Workload, work patterns and anything within the work environment that adds to the demands that staff face, including deadlines, student behaviour and parents.
- **Control:** How much say a staff member has in what they do and how they are able to do their work.
- **Support:** Including the sponsorship and resources provided by the school, and encouragement of leaders, line managers and colleagues.
- **Relationships:** Including how positive working behaviours are promoted to avoid conflict and effectively dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- **Role:** Including the extent to which staff understand their role within the school, how this fits with that of their department or function and the aims of the school and whether leaders ensure they do not have conflicting roles.
- **Change:** Includes how well organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated within the school.

The school's performance on wellbeing and stress management will be assessed in the context of the [HSE Management Standards](#). The Trust and Headteachers acknowledge the potential impact that work has on an individual's physical and mental health, and that they have a moral and legal duty for taking steps to promote staff wellbeing as far as reasonably practicable.

The Trust also recognises that work related stress can have a negative impact on staff wellbeing, and that it can take many forms and so needs to be analysed and addressed at an organisational level.

### **The Trust has a wellbeing charter and will promote the wellbeing of staff by:**

- Creating a working environment where potential work-related stressors are understood and mitigated as far as practically possible through good management practices.
- Increasing leaders' and staff members' awareness of the causes and effects of stress.
- Developing a culture that is open and supportive of people experiencing stress or ill-health.
- Engaging with staff to create constructive and effective working partnerships, both within teams and across the school.
- Promoting appropriate work life balance.
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing through effective health promotion programmes and initiatives.
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own work effectiveness as a means of reducing their own stress and that of their colleagues.

### **The Headteacher and the leadership team**

The Headteacher and the leadership team will:

- Support steps taken to develop a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect within the school.
- Promote effective communication.
- Ensure there are arrangements in place to support individuals.
- Treat individuals reporting to them with consideration and will promote a culture of mutual respect in the teams they manage. They will quickly and effectively deal with unacceptable behavior and will take decisive action when issues are brought to their attention.
- Ensure that there are opportunities for individuals to raise concerns about their work.
- Regularly check in with team members, encourage them and offer praise when it is due.
- Take action in the interests of all team members, other colleagues and students to manage the underperformance of any individual staff member.
- Attend training as appropriate in order to increase their awareness of the causes and effects of work-related stress.
- Encourage their staff to participate in activities undertaken by the School to promote wellbeing and more effective working.

## **Staff**

The Trust staff will:

- Treat colleagues and others they interact with during the course of their work with fairness, consideration and respect.
- Co-operate with the school's efforts to implement the Wellbeing Policy, attending briefings and raising their own awareness of the causes and effects of stress and poor wellbeing.
- Raise concerns with their line manager if they feel there are work issues that are having a negative impact on their wellbeing.
- Be liable for their own health and wellbeing as far as is practically possible.
- Take ownership of setting out their own development plan and discussing this as appropriate with their line manager, as one of the means to enable them to work effectively in their team and reduce the risk of stress.
- Take responsibility for working effectively in their assigned roles, supporting others as appropriate and helping to avoid causing stress to their colleagues.

## **3. Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

All teaching and non-teaching staff have a responsibility and important role in promoting and supporting the wellbeing of children and each other.

The Trust recognises that many behaviors and emotional concerns can be supported within the school environment, or with guidance from external professionals. Each

School has links with mental health professionals and organisations that provide support with mental health needs to children and their families. This includes, but not limited to:

- The school nursing service where available
- Educational psychology service from the Local Authority
- Pediatricians
- Getting Help Services
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services

- Family support workers
- Therapists

If a member of staff is concerned about the wellbeing of a pupil or other staff member, in the first instance they should speak to the Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **Risk and protective factors that are believed to be associated with health/ wellbeing outcomes**

	<b>Risk Factors</b>	<b>Protective Factors</b>
In the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genetic influences</li> <li>• Learning disabilities</li> <li>• Specific development delay or neuro-diversity</li> <li>• Communication difficulties</li> <li>• Difficult temperament</li> <li>• Physical illness</li> <li>• Academic failure</li> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure attachment experience</li> <li>• Outgoing temperament as an infant</li> <li>• Good communication skills, sociability</li> <li>• Being a planner and having a belief in control</li> <li>• Humor</li> <li>• A positive attitude</li> <li>• Experiences of success and achievement</li> <li>• Faith or spirituality</li> <li>• Capacity to reflect</li> </ul>
In the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overt parental conflict including domestic violence</li> <li>• Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted)</li> <li>• Inconsistent or unclear discipline</li> <li>• Hostile and rejecting relationships</li> <li>• Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs</li> <li>• Physical, sexual, emotional abuse, or neglect</li> <li>• Parental psychiatric illness</li> <li>• Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder</li> <li>• Death and loss – including loss of friendship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult)</li> <li>• Affection</li> <li>• Clear, consistent discipline</li> <li>• Support for education</li> <li>• Supportive long-term relationship or the absence of severe discord</li> </ul>
In the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bullying including online (cyber)</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships</li> <li>• Deviant peer influences</li> <li>• Peer pressure</li> <li>• Peer on peer abuse</li> <li>• Poor pupil to teacher/school staff relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear policies on behavior and bullying</li> <li>• Staff behavior policy (also known as code of conduct)</li> <li>• 'Open door' policy for children to raise concerns</li> <li>• A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health</li> <li>• Good pupil to teacher/school staff relationships</li> <li>• Positive classroom management</li> <li>• A sense of belonging</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive peer influences</li> <li>• Positive friendships</li> <li>• Effective safeguarding and Child Protection policies.</li> <li>• An effective early help process</li> <li>• Understand their role in and be part of effective multi-agency working</li> <li>• Appropriate procedures to ensure staff are confident to can raise concerns about policies and processes, and know they will be dealt with fairly and effectively</li> </ul>
In the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-economic disadvantage</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> <li>• Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Exploitation, including by criminal gangs and organised crime groups, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalization</li> <li>• Other significant life events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wider supportive network</li> <li>• Good housing</li> <li>• High standard of living</li> <li>• High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying</li> <li>• Opportunities for valued social roles</li> <li>• Range of sport/leisure activities</li> </ul>