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Learning without limits

# Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy 2024-2025

**Responsibility:** LVS Oxford Wellbeing and Mental Health Team

**Reviewed:** July 2024

**Reviewed by:** Deputy Headteacher

**Next Review due:** July 2025

## **Lead Members of Staff**

**Safeguarding Team:** Mel Waller, Vice Principal; Chris Lacey, Natasha Tillyer

**MH Lead:** Chris Childs, Deputy Headteacher

**Wellbeing and Mental Health Team:** Chris Childs, Natasha Tillyer, Laura Trinder, Kim Archer

**Mental Health First Aider:** Natasha Tillyer

**Learning for Life and Ready for Life Lead (PSHE and RSE):** Natasha Tillyer

At LVS Oxford, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all students, their families and members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows students' voices to be heard, and using effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

***Wellbeing** can be defined as the quality of our lives – how we are, and how our lives are going. There is subjective wellbeing which looks at how we think we are doing, and objective wellbeing which look at a range of external indicators such as poverty and so on to get an overall measure of wellbeing.*

Children's Society, 2017

***Mental Health** is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to her or his community.*

World Health Organisation

## **Strategy Statement and Aims**

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and students.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in students.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to students with mental health issues and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SMT that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff and student welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

Our strategy is a strand of our wider Safeguarding policies and procedures, and as such, supports safeguarding and wellbeing across the school community. It adheres to the latest government statutory guidance, with reference to other statutory frameworks and endorsed sources of support and advice:

- Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges (DfE, 2022)
- The SEN Code of Practice (DfE, 2014)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2022)
- Relationships and Sex Education (DfE, 2021)
- The Equality Act (2010)
- Mental Health Toolkit for Schools (PHE)
- Well-being Measurement Framework (*Headstart*)

### Statutory Role

The school's role in supporting and promoting mental health and wellbeing can be summarised as:

**Prevention:** creating a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely, improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school population, and equipping students and staff to be resilient so that they can manage the normal stress of life effectively. This will include teaching students and staff about mental wellbeing through the curriculum and reinforcing this teaching through school activities and ethos.

**Identification:** recognising emerging issues as early and accurately as possible.

**Early support:** helping students and staff to access evidence informed early support and interventions.

**Access to specialist support:** working effectively with external agencies to provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment.

There is good evidence to support the association between good mental health on one hand, and education engagement and academic achievement on the other. The benefits to preventing mental health problems in children and young people from arising, and intervening early where they do, can be significant for schools. For example, it may result in improved attainment, attendance, reductions in behavioural problems, as well as happier, more confident and resilient children and young people (Department for Education. *'Mental health and behaviour in schools: Departmental advice for school staff'* London: 2018).

### Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting wellbeing and positive mental health. It is intended as a guide for all staff including non-teaching staff, governors and trustees. This strategy should be read in conjunction with other relevant LVS Oxford policies and guidelines, see below:

Self-Harm Guidelines  
Ligature Cutter Guidelines  
Suicide prevention toolkit  
Eating disorders Guidelines  
Cultural and Conduct Policy

Safeguarding Policy  
Administration of medication policy  
Continuing Professional Development  
Equality and Diversity Policy

The school recognises its specific legal responsibilities towards students whose mental health condition falls within the definition of disability under the Equality Act (2010). The school seeks to ensure that our students are not discriminated against, that they have reasonable adjustments put in place to support their learning and that provision is tailored to address their barriers to learning.

### **What is mental health?**

Mental health refers to our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. We all have mental health. Our mental health affects how we think, feel, and act. It also impacts on how we cope, interact and form relationships with others, as well as our daily functioning. According to CAMHS, our mental health can vary and be dependent on a number of factors which may include:

- The number of demands and stressors we have
- Our physical health
- Significant life events
- How much sleep we get
- Relationships with other people
- Our diet/ nutritional intake
- Environmental, societal and cultural factors
- How much we engage in leisure activities, hobbies and interests

### **Specialist Autism Provision**

As an educational setting, we seek the guidance and expertise of health professionals in our provision for students with mental ill health. Whilst the school is committed to providing a supportive environment, it is important to recognise that it is not the responsibility of the school to replicate services that already exist in the community and the NHS. Where appropriate, anyone requiring further help will be assisted in accessing the required support from outside agencies.

The school facilitates and promotes wellbeing and positive mental health in its academic, *Learning for Life* (PSHE and RSE) and pastoral curricular. In addition, the setting of the school is part of the provision offer; it is used as a resource for promoting wellbeing and resilience through teaching and learning activities. Teaching methods are informed by recognised best practice within schools for students with autism; it is routinely reviewed and developed through staff training and guidance from autism specialists and health professionals.

The school seeks to ensure **safeguarding** informs all its practices and curriculum content. Attendance is routinely monitored, and, in the first instance, form tutors liaise with parents and carers if it falls below the expected threshold. The **Wellbeing and Mental Health Team** meet weekly to screen and identify students that may require monitoring and intervention. Information regarding sources of external support is shared with parents and carers via a directory published in the school newsletter as well as in the Annual Review Meeting. School assemblies deliver a values-based programme underpinned by the promotion of wellbeing and positive mental health.

## Risk Factors influencing the mental health of children

It is difficult to predict whether mental health problems will develop in anyone. Some individuals maintain good mental health despite traumatic experiences, whilst others develop mental health problems even though they live in a safe, secure and regulated environment. There are some common risk factors that increase the probability that young people will develop mental health problems. These include factors such as:

In the child	In the family	In the school	In the community
Autism Physical impairment Learning difficulty Young carer Attachment disorder / conditions	Separated or divorced parents Substance misuse Bereavement Poverty Poor housing	Bullying or harassment Pandemic experience of school and lockdown	Discrimination due to race, sexuality, gender, religion or disability Crime

Through routine screening, the Wellbeing and Mental Health Team will monitor and evaluate the impact of known and observed risk factors on members of the school community. Advice and guidance from health professionals will inform the actions taken and initiate interventions, if necessary.

### Staff Responsibilities

Recognising when a young person is suffering from mental health problems can sometimes be difficult. It can be difficult for young people with autism to speak out about the challenges they are facing. As an integral part of their role, all staff should be alert to the signs of possible mental health difficulties.

Warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns as a priority with the Designated Mental Health Lead or a member of the Wellbeing and Mental Health Team.

### Typical warning signs:

changes in social habits, such as withdrawal or avoidance of friends and family	unexplained physical changes, such as weight loss or gain	sudden poor academic behaviour or performance
self-harming	tiredness at school/sleeping problems at home	sudden mood and behaviour changes

NSPCC, 2021

### Signposting Support for Parents, Carers, Staff and Students

We will ensure that staff, students, parents and carers are aware of sources of support within school and the local community. The support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed, at and how to access it is outlined in Appendix A.

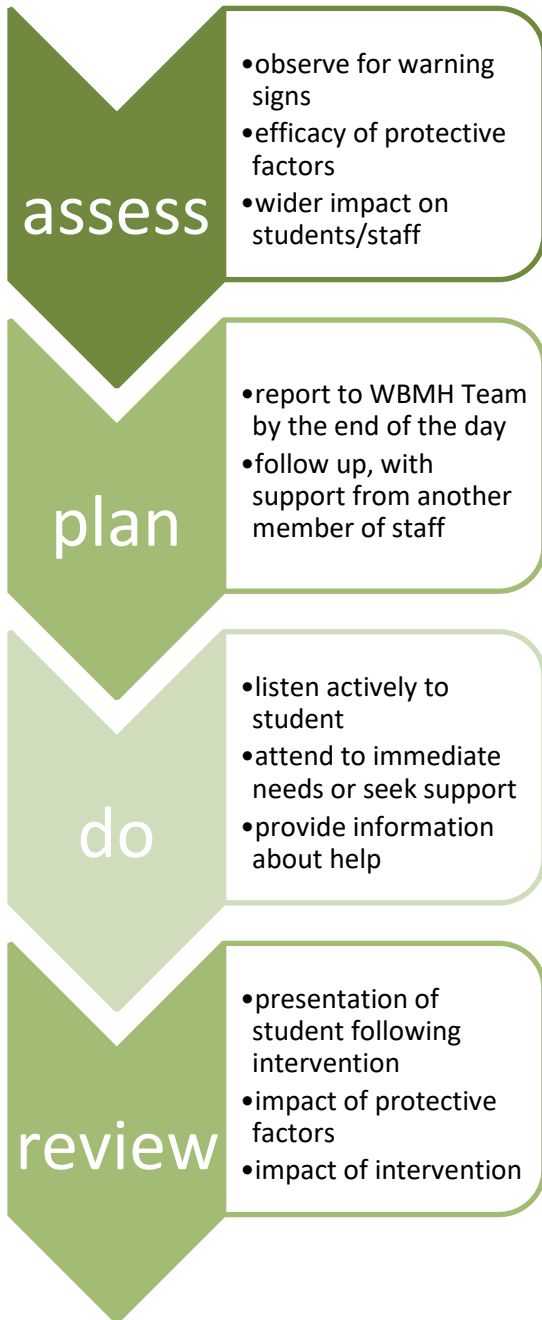
We will display relevant sources of support on notice boards in commonly accessible areas and will regularly highlight sources of support within relevant parts of the curriculum. In addition, our fortnightly school newsletter contains a directory of where to find help. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chances of students seeking help for themselves by ensuring students understand:

- What help is available
- How to access it
- Who it is aimed at
- What is likely to happen next

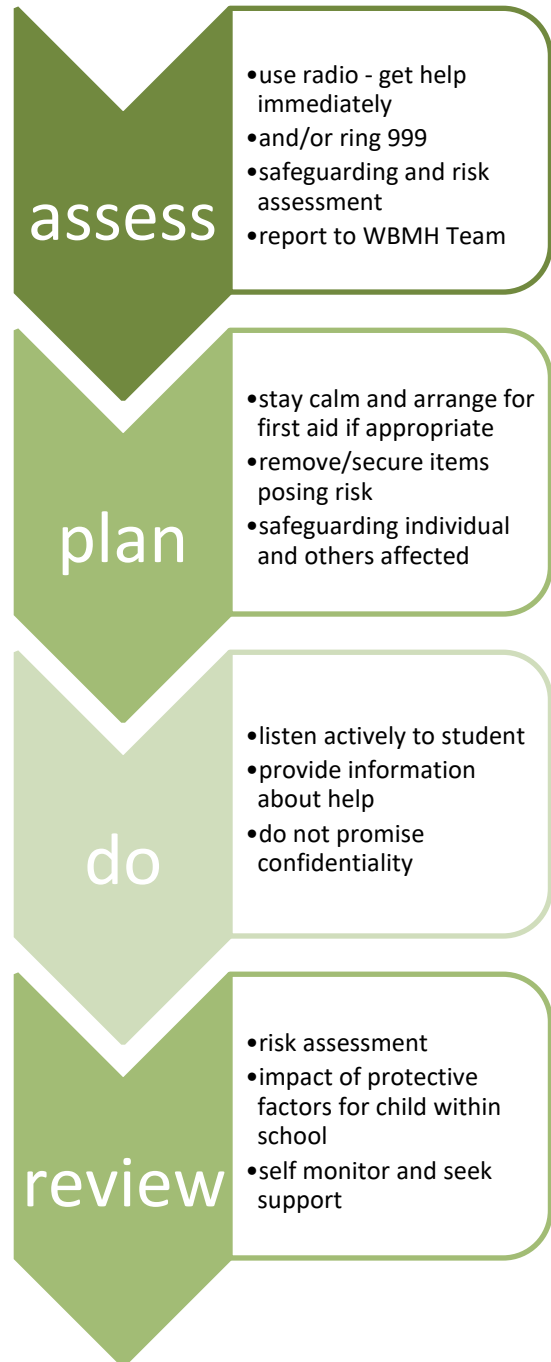
# Wellbeing and Mental Health Response Flow Chart STAFF

Doing OK ---- Struggling ---- Unwell ---- In Crisis

## No Immediate Risk of Harm



## Immediate Risk of Harm



### **The Designated Mental Health Lead**

The focus of the role is not to diagnose mental health conditions or deliver interventions. This is a strategic role putting whole school approaches in place and ensuring a coordinated approach. The role involves:

- Oversight of the whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing, including how it is reflected in the design of behaviour policies, curriculum and pastoral support, how staff are supported with their own mental wellbeing and how pupils and parents are engaged.
- Supporting the identification of at-risk students and students exhibiting signs of mental ill health.
- Knowledge of the local mental health services and working with clear links into children and young people's mental health services to refer children into services where it is appropriate to do so.
- Coordination of the mental health needs of young people within the school and oversight of the delivery of interventions where these are being delivered in the educational setting.
- Support to staff in contact with children with mental health needs to raise awareness and give all the staff the confidence to work with young people.
- Overseeing the outcomes of interventions on children and young people's education and wellbeing.
- Responsibility for managing serious mental health events.

### **Teaching about mental health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding our students need to keep themselves - and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our *Learning for Life* curriculum. Through this, we will follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively. Incorporating this into our *Learning for Life* curriculum at all stages provides a good opportunity to promote students' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people.

Additionally, we will use *Social Thinking* lessons as a vehicle for providing students who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting students to support any of their friends who are facing challenges

### **Supporting Students' Wellbeing**

Students with secure well-being demonstrate:

- A sense of belonging
- A feeling of security
- A feeling of competence
- A strong sense of a learner identity



The school supports wellbeing by providing students with the opportunity to learn **resilience and self-regulation**. The promotion and facilitation of these skills are an integral part of positive mental health. Promoting wellbeing shapes curriculum delivery, the enrichment activities on offer and the opportunities for students to take on **leadership and peer mentoring roles**.

Resilience and self-regulation skills are taught explicitly through the *Learning for Life* curriculum, and they are underpinned by the **values-based pastoral programme of assemblies and tutor group work**. In addition, the **school reward system**, involving Praise Postcards and recognition by the senior leadership team, is intended to promote recognition of effort, resilience, going 'Above and Beyond' and positive contributions to the LVS school community. **Daily routines and the school timetable** aim to support students so that they can begin the day in a regulated state and ready to learn. A Mental Health First Aider or the School Nurse can provide additional support for students.

### School Support Summary

<i>Student Wellbeing Mentor</i> (PACE-informed practice) /	Mental Health First Aider Support	Girls Group
<i>Social Thinking</i> Group	Form Tutor and Associate Tutor	Mental Health First Aider
Re-set Breaks and Sensory Support	Peer Mentors	Outdoor Learning
<i>Learning for Life</i> and <i>Ready for Life</i> (PSHE and RSE curriculum)	Values-based Assemblies and tutor group work	Visiting specialist speakers/workshops

### Managing disclosures

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm supportive and non-judgemental. All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on the CP Alert form and sent to the DSL immediately.

### Confidentiality

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a student to either someone within or outside of the school, then this will be first discussed with the student. We will tell them:

- Who we are going to tell
- Why we need to tell them
- What we are going to tell them
- When we're going to tell them

Ideally, consent should be gained from the student first, however, there may be instances when information must be shared, such as students up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

Parents must always be informed, but students may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, a timescale of 24 hours is recommended to share this information before the school makes contact with the parents/carers.

**If a student gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are safeguarding issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection procedures should be followed.**

### **Working with parents and carers**

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, there are questions we consider first:

- Can we meet with the parents/carers face-to-face or via TEAMS?
- Who should be present – students, staff, parents etc.?
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?

We are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and come to terms with the situation.

**Parents and carers are signposted to other sources of information and support that can be helpful in these instances.** At the end of the meeting, lines of communication are kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone call might be arranged at this stage.

### **Supporting parents and carers**

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of and have access to promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues experienced by children and young people with autism through our communication channels (Parent Portal, website, newsletters etc.)
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills. This may involve providing information or offering small, group-based programmes run by appropriately trained health or education practitioners

### **Individual Care Plans**

When a pupil has been identified as having significant cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, it is recommended that an Individual Care Plan should be drawn up. This is overseen by the School Nurse and Deputy headteacher. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals.

## Training

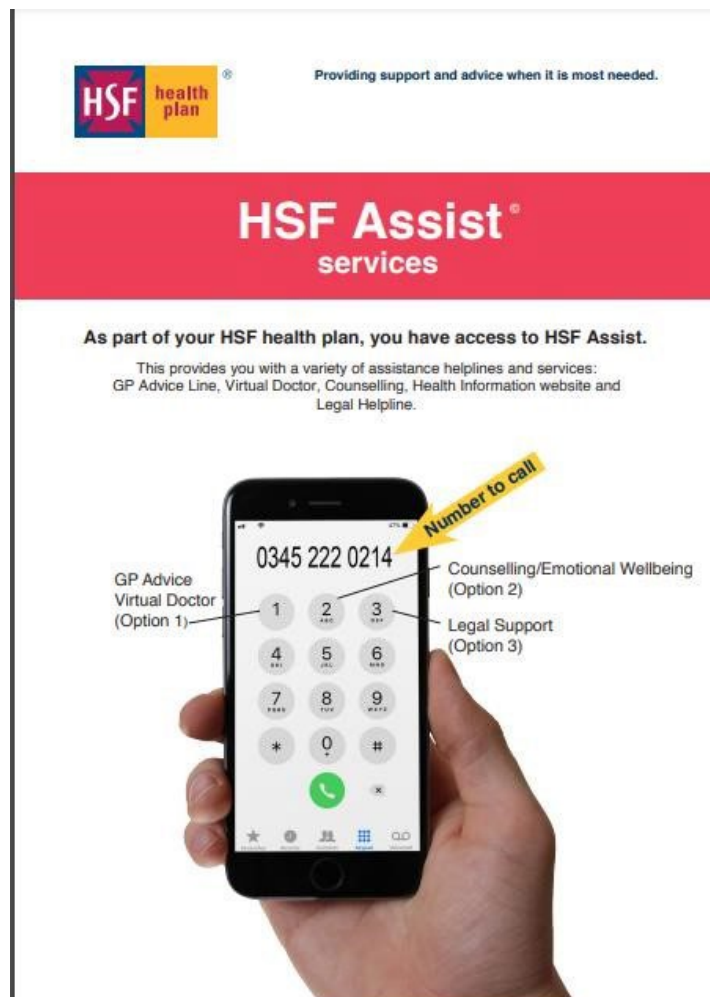
As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular safeguarding training to enable them to keep students safe. A nominated member of staff will receive professional Mental Health First Aid training or equivalent.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more students.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

## Supporting Staff

HSF can support colleagues with counselling, financial, legal and health support <https://hsfassist.com> via this link you will be able to see all the services offered. When calling them please quote the LTC as our employer, not LVS (Ascot, Hassocks or Oxford). Services are offered as part of our employee assistance programme provided by HSF Assist. These services are available 24/7 throughout the holidays.



The poster features the HSF health plan logo at the top left, with the tagline "Providing support and advice when it is most needed." to its right. Below this is a red banner with the text "HSF Assist services". Underneath the banner, it states "As part of your HSF health plan, you have access to HSF Assist." and lists the services: "GP Advice Line, Virtual Doctor, Counselling, Health Information website and Legal Helpline." The central image shows a hand holding a smartphone displaying the number "0345 222 0214". A yellow arrow points to the number with the text "Number to call". Three callout boxes point to the number: "GP Advice Virtual Doctor (Option 1)" points to the first three digits, "Counselling/Emotional Wellbeing (Option 2)" points to the last three digits, and "Legal Support (Option 3)" points to the last three digits.

## Appendix A: HELPFUL WEBSITES FOR PARENTS CARERS AND STUDENTS AT LVS OXFORD

For residents of Oxfordshire

[Special educational needs and disability: The local offer | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

### General

- [Oxfordshire County Council](#) – Useful websites for parents of children with SEND.
- [SENDIASS](#) – Oxfordshire based group supporting parents of children with SEN
- [Help Guide](#) – A parent’s guide to symptoms and diagnosis on the Autism Spectrum.
- [Autism Family Support](#) - Autism Family Support Oxfordshire is a local charity that aims to support the therapeutic education, development, and wellbeing of children and young adults on the autism spectrum in Oxfordshire.
- [OASIS: Oxfordshire Autistic Society](#) - A charity run by parent volunteers which offers a supportive community hub for families of children with autism.
- [Behaviour Strategies](#) - 15 behaviour strategies for students on the Autistic Spectrum
- [Help for Asperger's Teens](#) - Helping Asperger's teens to survive and thrive: 15 key steps

### Mental & Physical Health

- [CAMHS Oxfordshire](#) – Provide physical and mental health care for children and young people in Oxfordshire.
- [CAMHS Oxfordshire](#) - Further links and information about CAMHS in Oxfordshire.
- [Young Minds](#) – Advice and help for parents worried about their child’s behaviour and mental health.
- [NHS Child Health](#) – A comprehensive NHS site that provides practical advice and information on how to maintain a healthy lifestyle for you and your family.
- [Children’s Food Trust](#) - Information about healthy eating for parents.

### Physical Activity

- [Oxfordshire Sport](#) – Find out about how to stay active in Oxfordshire, find local sports clubs and classes for you and your child.
- [Oxford City Council](#) – Sport and Physical activity in your local area.
- [Cherwell District Council](#) – Information of sports clubs and school holiday programmes in your local area.

### Staying Safe

- [CEOP](#) - Child Exploitation and Online Protection. Offers advice and help about how to stay safe online.
- [Think You Know!](#) - Provides online safety advice for parents and carers.
- [Get Safe Online](#) - Offers practical advice on how to protect yourself and your children online.
- [OCC](#) - Keeping safe online and when socialising.
- [Reducing the Risk](#) - Information and advice surrounding domestic violence in Oxfordshire

### Bereavement

- [SeeSaw](#) – Grief support for children in Oxfordshire

### Parenting advice

- [Parents talking Aspergers](#) Training, advice and support for parents
- [Family Lives](#) - Advice and support for parents and carers with challenging children.
- [Talking Space](#) - is a free, confidential NHS service for adults in Oxfordshire, to help people when they are feeling stressed, anxious or low

*Please note that LVS Oxford is not accountable for any information held on these websites.*

## **For residents of Buckinghamshire**

[Special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND Local Offer\) | Family Information Service \(buckinghamshire.gov.uk\)](#)

### **General**

- [Buckinghamshire County Council](#)– Useful websites for parents of children with SEND.
- [SENDIASS](#) SEND Buckinghamshire based group supporting parents of children with SEN
- [Help Guide](#) – A parent’s guide to symptoms and diagnosis on the Autism Spectrum.
- [Autism Support groups](#)- Autism Support is a local charity which aims to support the therapeutic education, development, and wellbeing of children and young adults on the autism spectrum in Buckinghamshire.
- [Bucks mind autism support](#)- A charity run by parent volunteers which offers a supportive community hub for families of children with autism.
- [Behaviour Strategies](#) - 15 behaviour strategies for students on the Autistic Spectrum
- [Help for Asperger's Teens](#) - Helping Asperger's teens to survive and thrive: 15 key steps

### **Mental & Physical Health**

- [CAMHS Bucks](#)– Provide physical and mental health care for children and young people in Buckinghamshire.
- [Young Minds](#) – Advice and help for parents worried about their child’s behaviour and mental health.
- [NHS Child Health](#) – A comprehensive NHS site that provides practical advice and information on how to maintain a healthy lifestyle for you and your family.
- [Children’s Food Trust](#) - Information about healthy eating for parents.

### **Physical Activity**

- [Bucks SPORT](#) Find out about how to stay active in Buckinghamshire, find local sports clubs and classes for you and your child. **Staying Safe**
- [CEOP](#) - Child Exploitation and Online Protection. Offers advice and help about how to stay safe online.
- [Think You Know!](#) - Provides online safety advice for parents and carers.
- [Get Safe Online](#) - Offers practical advice on how to protect yourself and your children online.
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