

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

**This policy is intended to provide guidance for all staff, including non-teaching staff and governors. This policy may be read in conjunction with our Medical Policy in cases where a pupil's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue, and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified Special Educational Need.*

RATIONALE

Our school is a place to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives, it could offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that our community is able to manage times of change and stress, and that all are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

PURPOSE

We aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. In particular, our intention is to:

- Develop and sustain universal interventions which can be accessed and embedded in the ethos and culture of the school.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Provide information about promoting positive emotional health and mental wellbeing.
- Provide support when a pupil is experiencing mental ill health.
- Provide support when a family member is experiencing mental ill health.
- Alert staff to early warnings of mental health concerns and the process for reporting these.
- Provide support to staff working with children who are experiencing mental ill health
- Provide support and compassion to staff experiencing mental ill health.

BROAD GUIDELINES

Supporting Staff

- Our Absence Policy and Return to Work Policies are supportive of staff with emotional health and mental wellbeing issues, both during any periods of absence and upon their return to work, including phased returns.
- We shall be understanding of the differing needs of the staff, at different points and events during their life cycles, and offer support accordingly, if and when required. This may include support from our school counsellor.
- We will ensure that all staff have access to regular training sessions on health and wellbeing in school, including practical sessions to deal with wellbeing issues – both of pupils and their own. Appropriate time and resources will be dedicated to this.
- A staff wellbeing board is used where staff can show appreciation to each other and celebrate successes.
- Details of local and national agencies who may support emotional and physical wellbeing are available on the First Class conference.
- We have access to an Employee Assistance Programme for counselling – details of how to refer to this service are readily available in school and from the Executive Head teacher.
- Staff can also refer themselves to Occupational Health by contacting the schools HR Advisor, the current named person is Adele Savage.
- The school provide an incentive for promoting good attendance. Staff with 100% attendance are rewarded by having two days off of their choice the next academic year.

- A designated team of staff are available to support the wellbeing and mental health of staff, which includes a member of Senior Leadership.
- Staff complete regular online training covering a wide of topics to ensure they are familiar with issues that could arise in school.
- There is a designated Mental health and Wellbeing Lead , readily available to offer advise and support.
- Staff are invited to have a staff breakfast weekly in the staffroom, this is used to promote a sense of unity and belonging.
- In order to promote a good work/life balance, all staff are asked to include the following 'THINK WELLBEING' into their emails, within their email signature :

o This email was sent at a time and date convenient to the sender. Please do not feel under any pressure to respond if this is outside of your normal working hours.'

Staff are also expected to respect the message of this statement when awaiting responses from others.

- Staff are given the option to complete their PPA at home.
- Staff have access whole school training events eg Safeguarding

Supporting Pupils

Staff use a variety of methods and opportunities to promote emotional health and mental wellbeing alongside the national curriculum, these complement the whole school approach and overall ethos of the school. These include:

- Golden rules displayed in all classrooms so children are aware of school expectations.
- Celebrating awareness days and campaigns such as World Mental Health Day, Anti-Bullying Week etc.
- Reward system embracing positive behaviour and individual achievements such as attendance awards and behaviour awards assemblies.
- Promoting a Growth Mindset.
- Be healthy be safe week each year to give children information surrounding mental health and to equip the children with strategies to improve their mental health.
- Having a culture of challenge and responding to feedback to enable children to develop resilience.
- Providing regular PSHE sessions for all children.
- Encouraging co-operation and collaboration through peer working and Young Leaders such as Playmakers, School Council , Safety Officers, Librarians and ECO council.
- Encouraging an awareness of mental health through the Wellbeing Champions.
- Children can access 'drop in' sessions with our school counsellor, referrals are also in place for those who require longer term support.
- Our BERO group (Building Emotional Resilience Outdoors) support the emotional intelligence of children, enabling them to access curriculum intentions beyond the school environment.
- We undertake an annual, anonymous survey to monitor the wellbeing of all children. These results are shared and acted upon by the Senior Leadership Team.
- Children have the opportunity to raise money for external agencies eg.NSPCC.
- Childrens' good learning is celebrated weekly and this is shared with the whole school.
- Our values and ethos are promoted and celebrated weekly through the 'British values incentives'
- Pupils are given the opportunity to join a wide range of after school clubs which cater for a wide variety of likes and interests.
- All children have opportunities to go on trips to access new learning and experiences.
- A weekly vulnerable group meeting take place where staff can raise any concerns, this is documented with the Pastoral Careworker and the SENCo.
- As part of our targeted provision, the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing.
- Children have access to the 'Ocean Room' a secure area where they can discuss any issues or concerns with the Pastoral Careworker or other key member of staff.
- Children have the opportunity to care for and seek comfort from the school pets.

School staff may become aware of certain signs which indicate a pupil may be experiencing emotional health or mental wellbeing issues. These should always be taken seriously and staff

observing any of these signs will report their concerns using CPOMS the day of the concern. Possible warning signs include (but are not limited to):

- *Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope*
- *Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental*
- *Changes in eating habits*
- *Changes in sleeping habits, including falling asleep in lessons*
- *Increased isolation from friends and family or becoming socially withdrawn – this may include not wanting to spend time with friends at break-time, frequent fallouts or seeking adult company/reassurance.*
- *Changes in activity and mood*
- *Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide*
- *Using drugs or alcohol*
- *Changes in clothing – eg. long sleeves in warm weather*
- *Secretive behaviour*
- *Avoiding PE or asking to get changed privately*
- *An increase in lateness or absenteeism*
- *Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause – this may include repeatedly expressing feelings of being unwell or requesting to visit the first aid room/go home*

Supporting Parents/Carers & Families

We see parent/carer involvement as a vital part of promoting emotional health and mental wellbeing: alongside an open-door policy, regular opportunities exist to promote partnerships with parents/carers, including:

- Welcome meetings – a chance to meet staff, find out about the organisation, routines and curriculum. Enabling parents to support their children effectively with day-to-day change, promoting resilience.
- All families receive a welcome pack stating the role of the Pastoral Care Worker and signposting them to where they could access help if they need it.
- Structured parent consultation meetings with class teachers to provide feedback on the progress of the children.
- Parent forums with the school Pastoral Careworker to discuss questions and topics relating to school.
- Highlighting sources of support available within school and the local community: we will ensure this information contains services that are available to promote positive emotional wellbeing for all pupils, as well as those for children experiencing mental ill health. This information will be delivered via the curriculum, newsletters, the school website and events such as the Parent Forum and the school notice board.
- Ensuring that families living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing.
- Providing information about sources of support and information for adult mental health and emotional wellbeing services and making these readily available through our communication channels ie: newsletter, website and school notice board.
- Having access to the 'family room' for confidential meetings.
- Having regular updates via school facebook page/ website and regular newsletters detailing any updates and also to celebrate achievement.
- As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support families with emotional health and wellbeing.

Conclusion

The implementation of this policy will result in staff having a wide range of knowledge, skill and understanding of mental health and wellbeing within themselves and also within pupils. All stakeholders will have access to support when needed. The curriculum and school offer will support our aims in ensuring that the community is physically, emotionally and mentally, healthy and safe.