Mental Health And Wellbeing Policy

Date: January 2022
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1. <u>Why Mental Health and Well-Being is Important</u>

At our school, we recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall well-being and can affect their learning and achievement. Persistent mental health problems may lead to pupils having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice identifies Social, Emotional and Mental Health as one of the four areas of Special Educational needs.

All children go through ups and downs throughout their school career, and some face significant life events.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their pupils succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy".

Schools can be a place for children and young people 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, the school will be a place of respite from complicated home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting pupils' well-being. In addition, it can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that they can manage times of change and stress, be resilient, are supported to reach their potential and access help when they need it. We also have a role in ensuring that pupils 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.

We aim to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and be a school where
- all pupils are valued
- pupils have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- pupils feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma
- positive mental health is promoted and valued
- bullying is not tolerated

In addition to children's well-being, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and well-being.

2. **Purpose of the Policy**

This policy sets out
- how we promote positive mental health
- how we identify and support pupils with mental health needs
- how we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent mental health problems from getting worse
- key information about some common mental health problems
- where parents, staff and pupils can get advice and support

3. **Definition of Mental Health and Well-Being**

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing:
"… 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 make a contribution to her or his community."

Mental health and well-being is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/young people to
- feel confident in themselves
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others
- cope with the stresses of everyday life
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change
- learn and achieve

4. **Links to other Policies**

This policy links to our policies on:
- Child Protection & Safeguarding
- Behaviour & Anti-Bullying
- SEND
- Attendance
- PSHE / RSE

Links with the Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy are significant because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need. We consider behaviour to be communication.

5. **A Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Mental Health**

We take a whole-school approach to promote positive mental health to help pupils become more resilient, be happy and prosperous and prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses seven aspects:
1. creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience that everyone understands
2. helping pupils to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to

3. helping pupils to be resilient learners
4. teaching pupils social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health
5. early identification of pupils who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services
6. effectively working with parents and carers
7. supporting and training staff to develop their skills and resilience

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues and aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding. We aim to be a 'talking school' with an 'Open Door' Policy.

6. <u>Roles and Responsibilities</u>

We believe that all staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and understanding protective and risk factors for mental health. However, some children will require additional help, and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that pupils with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff understand possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as a long-term physical illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

The school's Inclusion Team: (SLT, SENDCO, Pastoral Officer, DSL, Inclusion Officer, Learning Mentors, Attendance Officer)
● leads on and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health
● provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates
● keeps staff up-to-date with information about what support is available
● liaises with the PSHE co-ordinator on teaching about mental health
● is the first point of contact and communicates with mental health services
● leads on and makes referrals to services

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times. There is a range of mental health professionals and organisations that support health needs and their families. Support includes:
● Inclusion leader
● Safeguarding/Child Protection Team
● Support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils
● SENDCO who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including pupils whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.
● Learning Mentors
● CAMHS core meetings to support staff to manage the mental health needs of pupils

7. <u>Supporting Pupils' Positive Mental Health</u>

We believe we have a crucial role in promoting pupils' positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our school has developed a range of strategies and approaches, including;

Transition Support
- Support for vulnerable children, such as Speech and Language (SALT), supports small group work such as Social Communication groups.
- Transition meetings with parent/carers, pupils and relevant staff
- Yearly Transition support for vulnerable children
- Key Adults might support secondary school visits with vulnerable pupils.

Class Activities
- Mindfulness and breathing/meditation in class
- Circle time

Whole School
- Wellbeing Focus, established in 2019
- Assembly themes
- Displays and information around the school about positive mental health and where to go for help and support both within the school and outside the school

Small-Group Activities
- Small friendship, social skills groups
- Lunchtime support with Inclusion Team
- Learning Mentor space or Inclusion Suite for those children who are finding the classroom overwhelming

Teaching about Mental Health and Emotional Well-being
- Through PSHE, we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help pupils be more resilient, understand mental health and help reduce the stigma of mental health problems.

Our approach is to:
- provide a safe environment to enable pupils to express themselves and be listened to

- ● ensure the welfare and safety of pupils as paramount
- ● identify appropriate support for pupils based on their needs
- ● involve parents and carers when their child needs support
- ● involve pupils in the care and support they have
- ● monitor, review and evaluate the support with pupils and keep parents and carers updated

8. <u>Early Identification</u>

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things from getting worse. We do this in different ways, including:
- ● Identifying individuals that might need support
- ● home visits in Foundation Stage to identify needs
- ● analysing behaviour, exclusions, visits to the medical room, attendance and
- ● staff report concerns about individual pupils to the Designated Safeguarding Team
- ● gathering information from a previous school at transfer or transition
- ● parental meetings
- ● enabling pupils to raise concerns to class teachers and support staff
- ● encouraging parents and carers to raise concerns through the school class
- ● teacher or any staff member - we have an 'Open Door Policy.'
- ● drop-ins with Educational Psychologist

All staff have had training on the protective and risk factors, types of mental health needs and signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health problems. Any staff member concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the Inclusion Team.

These signs might include:
- ● non-verbal behaviour
- ● isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- ● changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits
- ● lowering academic achievement
- ● talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- ● expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- ● an increase in lateness or absenteeism
- ● not wanting to do PE
- ● drug or alcohol misuse
- ● physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- ● wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- ● repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Staff are aware that mental health needs such as anxiety might appear as non-compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development.

If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm, then the school's child protection procedures are followed. In addition, a risk assessment and plan will be made.

Disclosures by Pupils

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgmental to pupils who verbally disclose concerns about themselves or a friend. Pupils' emotional and physical safety is paramount, and staff listen rather than advise. Staff are clear to pupils that the concern will be shared with the Inclusion Team and recorded in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil.

Assessment, Interventions and Support

All concerns are reported to the Inclusion Team and recorded. We then implement our assessment system based on levels of need to ensure that pupils get the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service. We aim to implement interventions as early as possible to prevent problems from escalating.

We recognise that just like physical health, mental health and emotional well-being can vary at any given time and is fluid and changes; there are no absolutes.

Need The level of need is based on discussions at the regular Inclusion meetings with key members of staff	Evidence-based Intervention and Support - the kinds of intervention and support provided will be decided in consultation with key members of staff, parents and pupils. For example	Monitoring
Highest Need	CAMHS-assessment, 1:1 or family support or treatment, consultation with school staff and other agencies School Mentor/counsellor -1:1 Support Educational Psychologist Involvement External agency support that provides 1:1 support and group Work If the school, professionals and/or parents conclude that a statutory education, health and care assessment is required, we refer to the SEND policy and SEN School Information Report.	All pupils need to be targeted individualised support will have an Individual Care Plan drawn up setting out - ● The needs of the pupils ● How the pupil will be supported ● Actions to provide that support ● Any special requirements Pupils and parents/carers will be involved in the plan. The plan and interventions are monitored, reviewed and evaluated to assess the impact Multi-agency meetings and regular reviews and feedback with parents/carers Early Help Referral and Children's Services if appropriate.
Some Need	Access to in school Nurture, Learning Mentors and Inclusion Suite. 1:1 intervention, small group intervention, wellbeing	Discussion, advice and support in Child and Mental Health Services (CAMHS) core hours

	programmes, circle of friends	for key staff
		An electronic log is kept and there are weekly safeguarding team meetings
Low Need	General support e.g. Lunch support, class teacher/TSA, Learning Mentor 'Check-in'	

9. **Working with Specialist Services to get swift access to the right Specialist Support and Treatment**

In some cases, a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, school refusal and other complex needs.

We make links with a range of specialist services and have regular contact with the services to review the support and consider the next steps as part of monitoring the pupils' provision.

The Inclusion Team will make school referrals to a specialist service following the assessment process and consult with the pupil and his/her parents and carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs.

Special Service	Referral process
CAMHS	Accessed through the school, GP or self-referral
School Inclusion Team	Accessed through the school office
Educational Phycologist	Accessed through SENDCO
Early Help Referral	Accessed through SENDCO or Designated Safeguarding Team

10. **Involving Parents and Carers in Promoting Mental Health**

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular, supporting their children with mental health needs.

To support parents and carers:
- we organise a range of Mental Health workshops accessing expertise from voluntary services such as Time to Talk. This includes topics such as Anxiety, Stress Management and Sleep.
- we provide information and signposting to organisations via emails on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- have an Open Door Policy.
- supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs through sensitive

and supportive regular meetings and signposting.

When a concern has been raised, the school will:
- contact parents and carers and meet with them
- in most cases, parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as child protection issues.
- offer information to take away and places to seek further information
- be available for follow up calls
- make a record of the meeting
- agree on an Action Plan
- discuss how the parents and carers can support their child
- keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger.

We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Pupils are our primary concern, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services, we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

11.   Involving Pupils

We seek pupils' views and feedback about our approach and whole school mental health activities through Pupil Voice, surveys, class questions and suggestion boxes.

12.   Supporting and Training Staff

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and well-being and to be able to promote positive mental health and well-being, identify mental health needs early in pupils and know what to do and where to get help.

Those staff with a specific responsibility have more specialised training and, where possible, access to supervision from mental health professionals.

Staff training to raise awareness of Mental Health and emotional well-being topics is regularly delivered.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and well-being of staff is an essential component of a healthy school, and we encourage opportunities to maintain a healthy work-life balance and well-being.

Staff have access to:
Employee Assistance Helpline 0800 328 1437

Education Support
https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/helping-you/telephone-support-counselling
A free and confidential helpline is available for staff in education with a dedicated counselling team.

UK-Wide: 08000 562 561   Text: 07909 341 229