

Goldsworth Primary School

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy



Policy Statement

'Mental Health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own 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' (World Health Organisation)

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all pupils, their families and members of staff and governors. We recognise that a pupil's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. It is widely recognised that a pupil's emotional health and wellbeing influences their cognitive development and learning as well as their physical and social health and their mental health in adulthood.

We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable individuals.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health by developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective support and interventions for mental health. We aim to promote a safe and stable environment for those affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing – it is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies, including PSHE, SEND, RSE and Behaviour Policy.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and pupils
- Promote the importance of expressing emotions appropriately
- Promote the importance of making and maintaining healthy relationships
- Develop feelings of being safe, valued and belonging, whilst building resilience to cope with the stresses of everyday life
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in pupils
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support for pupils who present with mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils with mental health issues and know where to signpost them
- Provide support to peers and parents of pupils suffering mental ill health
- Raise awareness and recognise that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing

Staff

All staff are responsible for promoting well-being and positive mental health across the school for others and themselves.

The benefits of promoting wellbeing and positive mental health include:

- Increased sense of fulfilment
- Increased morale, commitment and loyalty
- Staff feeling valued and supported for their contribution to the school
- An increase in personal resilience
- Improved performance
- Delivering high quality education for our pupils by developing a more motivated workforce working to high standards
- Improvements to staff recruitment and retention
- Reduction in costs associated with sickness absence and stress

The Senior Leadership Team aims to promote a culture where all members of the school community can achieve a sense of well-being and positive mental health by:

- Being open to two-way communication
- Helping staff feel safe and secure in their working environment
- Monitoring and reviewing procedures as necessary
- Having effective appraisal practices which contribute to the identification of well-being
- Regularly reviewing the support in place with staff representatives

Strategies to support staff wellbeing include:

- PPA time for teaching staff to enable sharing of creative curriculum planning, resources and ideas
- Welcoming staffrooms for staff to feel comfortable to relax
- No grading of lessons: feedback is based on strengths and areas for improvements, so they are meaningful CPD for staff
- An open culture where staff are able to discuss work-life balance issues within their team and/or within the appraisal system
- Opportunities for well-being activities
- Trained mental health first aiders
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Staff buddies
- Social events
- Dedicated Leadership time to work from out of school to allow for strategic thinking

If a member of staff is concerned about their own or a colleague's mental health, they can speak to a member of SLT or the Relational Support Worker who can provide supervision, or contact the Employee Assistance Programme.

Pupils

The benefits of promoting wellbeing and positive mental health include:

- Increasing sense of fulfilment and pride
- Improvements in attendance and behaviour
- Improved performance and outcomes
- Improved morale, feeling of being valued
- An increase in personal resilience and the ability to deal with change
- Well-rounded individuals
- Increased positive mental and physical wellbeing/health
- An increase in positive, healthy relationships

Whole school/ Universal approach

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing that aims to help pupils become more resilient, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise. We achieve this by:

- Teaching the skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe as part of our PSHE and RSE curriculum. The specific content of the lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others. We will follow the (PSHE Association Guidance/ SCARF) to ensure that we teach awareness of mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.
- Teaching emotional literacy throughout the school as appropriate to their age
- Teaching emotional understanding and regulation through the Zones of Regulation
- Having Need to Talk boxes in all classrooms
- Leading assemblies to raise pupil awareness of mental health
- Helping to develop a positive mind-set by being the Best that they can Be
- Supporting and training staff to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding whilst looking after their own mental health
- Working with parents and carers to help develop their understanding and skills of mental health
- Early identification of pupils who have mental health need and planning support to meet these needs

Staff Training

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some pupils will require additional help and all staff should have an awareness of early warning signs of mental health problems in order to signpost to the right support.

Risk factors include physical long-term illness, having a parent with mental health issues, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. Protective factors include high self-esteem, good communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and good emotional literacy. (see appendix A for full list of protective and risk factors)

All staff will receive regular training and/or updates about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of the regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe and well. The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue. Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge will be considered as part of the appraisal system and additional support will be provided where appropriate linked to developing situations with one or more pupils.

Pupil Identification

The policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, however key members of staff include:

- Emma Knight – Inclusion Lead/ Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Jo Foley – SENDCo
- Jo Williams – Pastoral and Family Support Worker
- Kate Clarke – Relational Support Worker
- Natalie White and Gemma Nuttall – ELSAs

We aim to identify pupils with mental health needs as early as possible. We do this in a variety of ways:

- Staff observations focusing on changes in behaviour, attention and/or presentation
- Communication from the pupils regarding their emotions and feelings e.g. during pupil conferencing
- Analysing behaviour and attendance
- Discussion in Pupil Progress meetings
- Weekly meetings for staff to raise concerns
- Gathering information from previous schools
- Parent consultation evenings or communication from parents

Signs to watch out for include:

- Isolation from friends/ socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity or mood
- Falling academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Secretive behaviour
- An increase in lateness and/or absenteeism
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental;
- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE
- Drugs or alcohol misuse
- 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 and hyperactivity.

Procedure for concern in relation to mental health issues

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupils should speak one of the above. We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgemental to pupils who disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of our pupils is paramount and staff listen rather than advise.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we think it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on then staff make it clear to the pupil that the concern will be shared with the appropriate member of staff (who, what and why) and recorded on CPOMs, in order to provide appropriate support.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with an appropriate colleague for other reasons: this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence, and it provides an extra source of ideas and support.

Parents/carers should always be informed and pupils may choose to tell their parents/carers themselves. If this is the case, the pupils should be given time to share this information before school contacts them. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal pupil protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to one of the DSLs.

If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary

Support for Friends

We recognise that when a pupil is experiencing mental health problems it can be challenging for their friends, who often want to help them but are not sure the best thing to do and can also be emotionally affected.

Targeted Support

We recognise that some pupils are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health e.g. those in care, young carers etc.

For pupils who have been identified with mental health needs, the school will aim to provide appropriate support through an intervention delivered by a trained member of staff. This may be from the Pastoral and Family Support Worker, the Relational Support Worker or one of the school Emotional Literacy Support Assistants. It may be as a group intervention, paired intervention or one-to-support. Targets will be agreed and review meetings will be held. Parents will be informed that the intervention is taking place.

Specialist Support

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the schools or with advice from external professionals. However, some pupils will need more intensive support at times and there are a range of mental health professional and organisations that provide this support to pupils and their families. These can be accessed through the school and include:

- Primary Mental Health Worker
- CAMHs
- Educational Psychologists
- Early Help

Persistent mental health problems may lead to pupils having significant greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age. In some cases the pupil may benefit from being identified as having a special educational need.

Working with Parents and Carers

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

It is very helpful if parents and carers can share information with the school so that we can better support their child – all information will be treated in confidence.

We are aware that parents/carers react in different ways to knowing their child has a mental health problem and we will be sensitive and supportive. We also aim to reassure by explaining that mental health problems are common and that help and advice is available.

Most parents/carers are very welcoming of support and information from the schools about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we aim to:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on the school website / newsletter
- All parents are made aware of who they can talk to and how to get the support they need if they have concerns about their child
- Make our Mental Health Policy easily accessible
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas to extending and exploring this at home
- Provide parent workshops on mental health, protective and risk factors and emotional literacy
- When appropriate, meet with parents/carers of pupils who have mental health needs and share ideas about how they can support positive mental health in their children
- Make every effort to support parents/carers to access services where appropriate

For some parents it can be shocking and upsetting to learn of their child's issues and some may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect. We should signpost them to other sources and helplines as appropriate.

Signposting

Support information and useful websites will be made available on the School website

Policy originally written by Alison Simpson, Emma Turner, Claire Carlton, Vicky Wood (08.07.21)

Next review September 2024