



TWESELDOWN INFANT SCHOOL

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

At Tweseldown Infant School, 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.

All children go through ups and downs during their school career and some face significant life events. In 2017, about 1 in 10 children aged 5 to 16 have a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on quality of life, relationships and academic achievement. In many cases it is life-limiting.

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".

School must be a place for children 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 and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting children's wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they 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.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a school where:

- All children are valued.
- Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Children 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 wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and wellbeing.

This policy sets out:

- How we promote positive mental health.
- How we prevent mental health problems.
- How we identify and support children with mental health needs.
- How we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent or address mental health problems.
- Where parents, staff and children can get further advice and support.

The World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing 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".

Mental health and wellbeing 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.

A whole school approach to promoting positive mental health

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise. This encompasses seven aspects:

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.
2. Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.
3. Helping children to be resilient learners.
4. Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
5. Early identification of children 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 their own resilience. We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues.

Staff roles and responsibilities

We currently subscribe to Hampshire County Councils Employee support line for counselling. 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 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 children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need. All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as: physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They should 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

Supporting children's positive mental health

We believe school has a key role in promoting children's positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our school has developed a range of strategies and approaches including:

- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health.
- Friendship bench
- Transition Programme
- Worry monsters - where children can anonymously share worries or concerns in class
- Mental health teaching programmes e.g. based on cognitive behavioural therapy
- Circle times
- Breakfast club
- Wellbeing week – whole school focus on doing things which make us feel good
- Displays and information around the School about positive mental health and where to go for help and support
- Nurture groups
- Thrive
- TALA

Within KS1 and EYFS as part of the RSE curriculum:

- To recognise, name and describe feelings including good and not so good feelings.
- Simple strategies for managing feelings.
- How their behaviour affects other people.
- About empathy and understanding other people's feelings
- To cooperate and problem solve.
- To motivate themselves and persevere.
- How to calm down
- About change and loss and the associated feelings (including moving home, losing toys, pets or friends).
- Who to go to if they are worried.
- About different types of teasing and bullying, that these are wrong and unacceptable.
- How to resist teasing or bullying, if they experience or witness it, whom to go to and how to get help.

Identifying, referring and supporting children with mental health needs

Our approach:

- Provide a safe environment to enable children to express themselves and be listened to.
- Ensure the welfare and safety of children are paramount.
- Identify appropriate support for children based on their needs.
- Involve parents and carers when their child needs support.
- Involve children in the care and support they have.

Early Identification

We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- Boxall Profile
- Thrive assessment
- Analysing behaviour, exclusions,
- Using Leuven scales to identify children in EYFS who need support.
- Staff report concerns about individual children to the relevant lead persons.
- Worry monsters in each class for children to raise concerns which are checked by the Class Teachers
- Pupil Progress Review meetings termly
- Gathering information from a previous school at transfer.
- Parental meetings in EYFS.
- Enabling children to raise concerns to any member of staff.
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns to any member of staff.

Signs might include:

- Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits.
- 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 or absenteeism.
- Not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE.
- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather.
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
- 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 our child protection procedures are followed. If there is a medical emergency then our procedures for medical emergencies are followed.

Disclosures by children and confidentiality

All disclosures are recorded and held in CPOMs on the pupil's confidential file. We then implement interventions based on levels of need to ensure that children get the support they need, either from within school or from an external specialist service. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating.

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, self-harm and eating disorders. We have access to a range of specialist services and during the support will have regular contact with the service. School referrals to a

specialist service will be made by the Mental Health Lead or the SENDCO. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the pupil and parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs. Main Specialist Service Referral process Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CYPMHS).

Involving parents and carers

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 children who do have mental health needs. On first entry to the School, our parent's meeting includes a discussion on the importance of positive mental health for learning. We ask parents to inform us of any mental health needs their child has and any issues that they think might have an impact on their child's mental health and wellbeing. We also aim to reassure by explaining that mental health problems are common, that the school has experience of working with similar issues and that help and advice are available.

Supporting and training staff

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identify mental health needs early in children and know what to do and where to get help. Our Mental Health Lead is a qualified 'mental health first aider' and a number of our staff have completed the one day course on mental health first aid. Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing e.g:

- Well being day
- Well being week
- Leaving early 1 day a term
- Attendance at children's activities
- 'light touch' weeks
- Access to HCC counselling

Date reviewed: September 2023

Date Ratified by Governing Board: September 2023

Next review date: September 2025

Member of staff responsible: Head Teacher

Governing Board or Governor(s) / Committee(s) responsible: Governing Board

Signed by Chair of Governors:



The plan is also available in the following formats, on request to the Head Teacher:
e-mail; enlarged print version

Links to other policies

- Safeguarding
- Medical Needs
- Anti-Bullying
- SEND
- Equalities
- Behaviour