

Duddon Saint Peter's CE School



Mental Health & Wellbeing - Children

We are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. We have a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience; where each individual and contribution is valued. At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times; anyone may need additional emotional support.

Aim

Our aim is 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 and we have a separate policy dedicated to this.

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 their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.*

A Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Mental Health

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

At our school we:

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings better.

- help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries.
- Help children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to
- promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count.
- Help children to be resilient learners
- help children to develop confidence.

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 of mental health issues. We aim to be a 'talking school' with an 'Open Door Policy'.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
- promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making.
- celebrating academic and non-academic achievements.
- providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others.
- providing opportunities to reflect.
- access to appropriate support that meets their needs.

The school's Mental Health Well-Being Team (Head Teacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead/ SENDCO / Mental Health Lead/ Mental Health First Aider/Elsa are responsible for:

- leading and working with other staff members to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health
- providing advice and support to staff and organises training and updates
- keeping staff up-to-date with information about what support is available
- liaising with staff on teaching about mental health
- being the first point of contact and communication with mental health services
- leading on and making referrals to services

There are clear links with the Positive Relationships & Behaviour Policy because we believe that behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, is likely to be related to an unmet mental health need.

We **consider behaviour to be a message**

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Medicines/First Aid policies and our SEND policy in cases where pupils' mental health needs overlap with these. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for Behaviour and Anti-bullying, and PSHE and SMSC policies and should also sit alongside child protection procedures.

Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. By staff being genuinely curious about children's mental health and wellbeing this will promote an open environment that supports the 'whole child'. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we teach but we will also use the PSHE scheme of work, No Outsiders and resilience resources to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner. We will cover the following themes: Relationships, Living in the Wider World and Health and Well-being.

We teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help pupils to be more resilient, understand about mental health and help reduce the stigma of mental health problems. We support this using other resources such as those from MyMind, Bounce Forward, The Anna Freud Centre and using Zones of Regulation.

Assessment, Interventions and Support

All concerns are reported on CPOMS to the Designated Safeguarding 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. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating. The Safeguarding Team regularly reviews all processes. All staff are trained to use CPOMS.

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.

Targeted support

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- circle time approaches or 'circle of friends' activities.
- Friendship Terrace activities
- targeted use of resilience resources, trauma informed approaches
- managing feelings/emotions resources e.g. 'worry boxes' 'The Blob Tree' and emotion scales.
- Active listening approaches.
- Zone of Regulation approaches.
- ELSA support groups.
- Sensory room
- therapeutic activities including art, lego and relaxation and mindfulness.
Techniques and breathing/meditation in class.
Mental Health Wellbeing focus threading throughout the school ethos and PSHE curriculum
- Anna Freud Schools in Mind resources
- Encouraging positives relationships so children can be aware of Trusted Adults around them and where to find support

- Collective Worship and calendar of Mental Health and Wellbeing themes
- Using the Power of Reading to explore themes and learn about emotions, difference, loss, bullying, change, resilience, etc. - the whole school will explore No Outsiders.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support. The school webpage on MHWB helps to show where to get specialist support. Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. Annual pupil voice will flag any additional issues to staff. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the designated safe guarding Lead, SLT or the mental health wellbeing lead.

Possible warning signs include:

- changes in eating / sleeping habits
- becoming socially withdrawn
- soiling
- change in communication/behaviours.
- changes in activity and mood
- talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- an increase in lateness or absenteeism

Working with Parents & Carers

In order to support parents and carers we will:

- highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing
- share and allow parents/carers to access sources of further support e.g. MHWB webpage on the school website.
- ensure that all parents/carers are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their child.
- make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents/carers
- complete annual parent/carer voice view surveys to ensure transparency and evaluate feedback.
- share ideas about how parents/carers can support positive mental health in their children.
- keep parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

Working with other agencies and partners

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- educational psychology services
- behaviour support through a pupil referral unit
- MyMind website
- paediatricians
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- counselling services
- therapists
- Safeguarding/Child Protection Team
- 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.
- NHS Mental Health Schools Team (MHST) to provide group work and support for child/Parent/carers and staff
- Autism Outreach
- Mental Health in Schools Team (MHST) Transition Workshops across Year 6 to chosen high school.

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep students safe. 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 our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more pupils.

Staff

Governors are very mindful to respect the health and wellbeing of staff and this is a regular agenda item at governor meetings. Staff surveys are also conducted to monitor this.

Date: *March 2024*

Date of review *Spring 2026*