

Southwood Primary School



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

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 Organization)

Policy Date: July 2024

Reviewed: July 2027

Aims of the Policy

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. We aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils. In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental health and wellbeing overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils;
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues;
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing;
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and wellbeing issues; □
Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers'

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

Jason O'Byrne, Deputy Headteacher - Designated Child Protection Officer & Inclusion Lead
Donna Dobson - Thrive Coach
Bianca Mohammed - Healthy Schools Lead
Gemma Bird - Emotional Health Coach
Megan Veysi - SENDco
Georgia Easter - Emotional Health Coach
Mental Health Support Team - NHS
Place2Be

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Mental Health Lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSL & Safeguarding Team. If the pupil

presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Jason O'Byrne and or Megan Veysi. Where appropriate and where there is no risk of immediate harm, mentors will complete an assessment to identify areas and significance of the concern.

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receives a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition;
- Special requirements and precautions;
- Medication and any side effects;
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency

Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. Our PSHE curriculum is also supplemented by partners with palce2be, bounce forward, trauma informed schools UK, Beacon House, mentally healthy schools and Young Minds.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking by ensuring pupils understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen next

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with Jason O’Byrne, our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead through the use of CPOMS.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Working with Parents

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, other members of staff.

- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many 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 always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

Working with All Parents

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website;
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child;
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents;
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings;
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told;
- How friends can best support;

- Things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset; ☐ Warning signs that their friend help (e.g. signs of relapse).

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

Intervention & Support

As a school there are a number of interventions and support mechanisms that we can signpost children, staff and parents towards.

For children, we have specialist trained Nurture Leaders, learning mentors, Thrive practitioner and a Therapist who deliver sessions that help support the emotional needs of pupils.

The school has 2 nurture groups support children who have been identified as needing additional social, emotional or mental health support. This may be because they are struggling to cope in class due to behavioural, confidence or for self-esteem reasons. Our nurture leaders are trained by the UK Nurture network to ensure they are working within most effective practice.

We understand that families can through difficult and traumatic circumstances that can affect the mental health of a number of people involved. Our Parent Support advisor can support parents with housing, benefit and parenting needs. We also work closely with Early Help Support Services, provided by the local authority, to ensure parents have access to timely support and care.

As well as supporting pupils and families, we understand the importance of supporting staff. We ensure that new staff have an effective induction, and are buddied up with a new colleague to help support them through the transition to a new work place. We have regular performance management meetings which allow staff to have open honest discussions with senior member of staff. We have a clear line management system, which means staff should feel like they are able to talk to someone in a timely manner.

The Senior Leadership Team should be sensitive to any problems which may cause the employee stress-related issues and should act in a professional, fair, consistent and timely manner when a concern arises. Where additional, professional advice is required, the school has contacts with Occupational Health Professionals and Human Resource experts and these avenues should be utilised. Where necessary, staff should be encouraged to use the confidential counselling service listed in The Staff Handbook and signposted in school. This service provides staff with serious concerns to obtain advice and support outside of the workplace. During this time, the school will ensure that at all times the staff member's privacy and dignity is respected.

On a day to basis, the leadership team looks for opportunities to promote staff wellbeing. We ensure effective communication by having email briefings and a weekly face-to-face meeting which we encourage staff to attend. We encourage CPD for all staff, and are open for staff talking to us about their development needs. We encourage social events and look to advertise more events in the near future.

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 pupils safe.

Jason O'Byrne, Scott Halliwell and Gemma Bird are all trained in Mental Health First Aid. Scott Halliwell has Senior Leadership training for Mental Health and is our designated senior leader.