

# Mental Health & Well-Being Policy

## Why Mental Health and Well-Being is important at Heswall Primary School

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health and well-being for our whole school community; pupils, staff, parents and carers, and recognise how important mental health and emotional Well-being 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. 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 Need. At Heswall Primary School we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times go through ups and downs. Some will face significant life events. About 10% of children aged 5 to 16 have a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on their quality of life, relationships and academic achievement.

The department for education (DofE) recognises that: *in order to help their pupils succeed; school have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy.*

School 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 five positive experiences for the 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 pupil's well-being and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role at Heswall Primary is to ensure that they are able to 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 to ensure 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.

At Heswall Primary we help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and be a school where:

- Help children to understand their emotions and feeling better
- Help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- Help children socially to form and maintain relationships
- Promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count
- Encourage children to be confident and 'dare to be different'
- Help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks.
- Encourage children to feel able to talk openly with trusted adult about their problems without feeling any stigma
- Bullying is not tolerated

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

### **The purpose of the Policy**

This policy sets out

- How we promote positive mental health
- How we prevent mental health problems
- How we identify and support pupils with mental health needs
- How we train and support staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warnings signs to help prevent mental health problems getting worse
- Key information about some common mental health problems
- Where parents, staff and pupils can get advice and support

*... 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's definition of mental health and well-being

Mental health and well-being is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children and young people to

- Feel confident in themselves
- 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

### **Links to other Policies**

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Inclusion, Looked After Children, Anti-Bullying, Behaviour and Discipline, Personal Social Health Education (PSHE), Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy.

Links with the Behaviour and Discipline Policy are especially important 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 a message*.

### **Heswall Primary, delivering a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health.**

At Heswall we take a whole school approach in promoting positive mental health, and aim to help pupils become more resilient, be happy and successful 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 relationship, 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 of mental health issues. We aim to be a 'Talking School' with an 'Open Door Policy'.

***"The experience I have had is that once you start talking about experiencing a mental health struggle, you realize that actually you're part of quite a big club."*** – Prince Harry

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

At Heswall Primary 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 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 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 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 development of a School Mental Health Team (Head teacher, Senior Mental Health Lead, Class representatives, Parent and Governor).

- Leads on and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health
- Provides advice and support to staff and organizes training and updates
- Keeps staff up-to-date with information about what support is available
- Liaises with the PSHE Leader on teaching about mental health

- Is the first point of contact and communicates with mental health services
- Lead on and makes referrals to services

We at Heswall Primary recognize 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, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organizations that provide support to pupils with mental health needs and their families. Support includes:

- Safeguarding/child protection team
- SENCO who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational need and disabilities (SEND), including pupils whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision
- ELSA staff who manage and support the mental health needs of pupils
- School nurse
- CAMHS core meeting to support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils

## **Supporting Pupils' Positive Mental Health**

At Heswall Primary, we believe that we have a key 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:

### *Pupil-led Activities*

- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health

### *Transition Support*

- Support for vulnerable children, for example, ELSA, LEGO Therapy or Social Communication groups
- Transition meeting with parents/carers, pupils and relevant staff.
- Key adults may support secondary school visits with vulnerable pupils

### *Class Activities*

- Worry boxes
- Kindness/Compliment Boards
- Mindfulness and breathing/meditation in class

### *Whole school*

- Anna Freud *Schools in Mind* resources

- 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
- PSHE
- Themed Days
- MEAS
- Mindfulness

#### Small Group Activities

- Small friendship, social skills groups
- Lunch Club support (Fridays)
- Quiet areas for those children who are finding the classroom overwhelming

#### Teaching about Mental Health and emotional well-being

- Through PHSE 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.

Key stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children learn to explore feelings through *Christopher Winter* and *Medway* topics:

- PSHE encompasses all areas designed to promote children's personal, social and health development. It gives children the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need to stay healthy and safe, develop worthwhile relationships, respect differences, develop independence and responsibility, and make the most of their own abilities and those of others.
- Personal and Social Education plays an important role in everyday life at Heswall Primary. Our aim is to allow each child the opportunity to achieve his/her potential in happy, caring surroundings, encouraging pupils to develop self-confidence and self-esteem

Our approach is to:

- Provide a safe environment to enable pupils to express themselves and to 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 decision as to the care and support they will have
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with pupils and keep parents and careers updated

## Early Identification

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways:

- Identify individuals that might need support
- Working with the school office staff who are often the first point of contact with families seeking support
- Induction meeting for pupils/families joining after the Reception year
- Analysing behaviour, exclusions, attendance and weekly behaviour reports
- Pupil surveys at the beginning of the school year
- Staff report concerns about individual pupils to the SENCO and Designated Safeguarding Team
- Worry boxes in each class for pupils to raise concerns which are checked by the class teacher
- Weekly staff briefing for staff to raise concerns about individual children
- Gathering information from previous school at transfer or transition
- Parental meetings
- Enabling pupils to raise concerns to class teacher and support staff
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns through the school class teacher or to any member of staff - we have an *Open Door Policy*

All staff have had training on the protective and risk factors (see Appendix 1), types of mental health needs (see Appendix 2) and signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health problems. Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the SENCO or Designated Safeguarding Team.

These signs might include:

- Anxiety
- Low mood
- Being withdrawn
- Avoiding risks
- Unable to make choices
- Low self-worth
- Isolating themselves
- Refusing to accept praise
- Failure to engage
- Poor personal presentation
- Lethargy/apathy

- Daydreaming
- Unable to make and maintain friendships
- Speech anxiety/reluctance to speak
- Task avoidance
- Challenging behaviour
- Restlessness/over-activity
- Non-compliance
- Mood swings
- Impulsivity
- Physical aggression
- Verbal aggression
- Perceived injustices
- Disproportionate reactions to situations
- Difficulties with change/transitions
- Absconding
- Eating issues
- Lack of empathy
- Lack of personal boundaries
- Poor awareness of personal space

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 to hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationship or development.

If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the school's protection procedures are followed.

### **Verbal Disclosures by Pupils**

We at Heswall Primary recognize how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgmental to pupils who verbally disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of pupils is paramount and staff listen rather than advice. Staff are clear to pupils that the concern will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Team and recorded in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil.

### **Non-Verbal Disclosures by Pupils**

Staff also recognize persistent and unusual non-verbal disclosures in behaviours in line with the NICE (National Institute of Health & Care Excellence) recommendation that behaviour may be an unmet need or message.

## **Confidentiality**

All disclosures are recorded within the pupil's confidential file, including date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps.

## **Involving Parents and Carers**

### *Promoting Mental Health*

We at Heswall Primary School recognize 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 provide information and signposting to organisations on our website on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes
- We have an Open Door Policy
- Supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs through sensitive and supportive regular meeting 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 (CPOM)
- Agree and 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.

## **Involving Pupils**

- We seek pupils' views and feedback about our approach and whole school mental health activities through Pupil Voice, surveys and suggestion boxes.
- We will be introducing Anna Freud Peer support for children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing
- We will be introducing Anti-bullying Ambassadors to support vulnerable children in school

## **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 pupil and know what to do and where to get help. (see Appendix 3)

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 have been accessed through

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component to a health school and we promote opportunities to maintain a health work life balance.

Staff have access to Health Assured Employee Assistance Programme.

Tel: 0800 030 5182

[www.healthassuredeap.com](http://www.healthassuredeap.com)

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy was made in collaboration with the whole school. Its effectiveness will be monitored by the SLT. This policy will be reviewed every **3 years**.

## **Appendix 1**

**Protective and Risk factors (adapted from Mental Health and Behaviour DoFE  
November 2018)**

	<b>Risk factors</b>	<b>Protective factors</b>
<b>In the child</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genetic influences</li> <li>• Low IQ and learning disabilities</li> <li>• Specific development delay or neuro-diversity</li> <li>• Communication difficulties</li> <li>• Difficult temperament</li> <li>• Physical illness</li> <li>• Academic failure</li> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure attachment experience</li> <li>• Outgoing temperament as an infant</li> <li>• Good communication skills, sociability</li> <li>• Being a planner and having a belief in control</li> <li>• Humour</li> <li>• A positive attitude</li> <li>• Experiences of success and achievement</li> <li>• Faith or spirituality</li> <li>• Capacity to reflect</li> </ul>
<b>In the family</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overt parental conflict including domestic violence</li> <li>• Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted)</li> <li>• Inconsistent or unclear discipline</li> <li>• Hostile and rejecting relationships</li> <li>• Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs</li> <li>• Physical, sexual, emotional abuse, or neglect</li> <li>• Parental psychiatric illness</li> <li>• Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder</li> <li>• Death and loss – including loss of friendship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult)</li> <li>• Affection</li> <li>• Clear, consistent discipline</li> <li>• Support for education</li> <li>• Supportive long term relationship or the absence of severe discord</li> </ul>

## Protective and Risk factors Cont.

	Risk factors	Protective factors
<b>In the school</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bullying including online (cyber)</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships</li> <li>• Deviant peer influences</li> <li>• Peer pressure</li> <li>• Peer on peer abuse</li> <li>• Poor pupil to teacher/school staff relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear policies on behaviour and bullying</li> <li>• Staff behaviour policy (also known as code of conduct)</li> <li>• 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems</li> <li>• A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health</li> <li>• Good pupil to teacher/school staff relationships</li> <li>• Positive classroom management</li> <li>• A sense of belonging</li> <li>• Positive peer influences</li> <li>• Positive friendships</li> <li>• Effective safeguarding and Child Protection policies.</li> <li>• An effective early help process</li> <li>• Understand their role in and be part of effective multi-agency working</li> <li>• Appropriate procedures to ensure staff are confident to can raise concerns about policies and processes, and know they will be dealt with fairly and effectively</li> </ul>
<b>In the community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-economic disadvantage</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> <li>• Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Exploitation, including by criminal gangs and organised crime groups, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation</li> <li>• Other significant life events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wider supportive network</li> <li>• Good housing</li> <li>• High standard of living</li> <li>• High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying</li> <li>• Opportunities for valued social roles</li> <li>• Range of sport/leisure activities</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2

### Specific mental health needs most commonly seen in school-aged children

For information see Annex C Main Types of Mental Health Needs  
Mental Health and Behaviour in School DfE March 2016

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

Annex C includes definitions, signs and symptoms and suggested interventions for  
Anxiety (including panic attacks, phobias and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder OCD)  
Depression  
Eating Disorders  
Substance Misuse  
Self Harm

The DfE guide does not include specific information on suicidal thought

#### *Suicidal Thoughts*

Young people may experience thoughts and feelings about wanting to end their lives. Some young people never act on these feelings but may openly discuss and explore them, while other young people die suddenly from suicide without any apparent warning signs.

## Appendix 3

### Where to get information and support

*For support on specific mental health needs*

Anxiety UK [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk) OCD UK [www.ocduk.org](http://www.ocduk.org)

Depression Alliance [www.depressoinalliance.org](http://www.depressoinalliance.org)

Eating Disorders [www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk) and [www.inourhands.com](http://www.inourhands.com)

National Self-Harm Network [www.nshn.co.uk](http://www.nshn.co.uk)

Self-Harm [www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk)

Suicidal thoughts [Prevention of young suicide UK – POPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

*For general information and support*

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) champions young people's mental health and wellbeing

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) advice and support on mental health problems

[www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk) (e-learning)

[www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk) tackles the stigma of mental health

[www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org) challenges attitudes towards mental health