

# Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

**October 2019**



## Why Mental Health and Wellbeing is important

At Glasshouses Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole 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 life 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 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." Schools can be a place for children to experience 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 crucial 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.

### 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 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
- ❖ Key information about some common mental health problems.
- ❖ Where parents, staff and children can get further advice and support.

### Definition of Mental Health

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing:

*" 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

### How the policy was developed and who was consulted

The development of this policy was led by our SENDCO, in consultation with children, staff, parents and carers and the relevant documentation for Social, Emotional & Mental Health Needs.

In developing this policy we have taken account of:

- ❖ Children and Young People's Mental Health: State of the Nation 2016.
- ❖ Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing, Public Health England 2015.
- ❖ Preparing to teach about mental health, PSHE Association 2015.
- ❖ Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools, DfE 2014.
- ❖ Supporting children with medical conditions, DfE 2014.
- ❖ Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools DfE October 2018

### Links to other policies

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Medical Needs, Anti-Bullying, SEND and Equalities. Links with the School's Behaviour Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need.

## 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, including those with specific responsibility

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.

### Our SENCO:

- ❖ Carries out Boxall assessments to give a clearer view of a child's needs.
- ❖ Leads and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- ❖ Leads on PSHCE teaching about mental health.
- ❖ Provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates.
- ❖ Is the first point of contact with mental health services, and makes individual referrals to them.

We recognise 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 organisations that provide support to children with mental health needs and their families.

Sources of relevant support include:

- ❖ Compass Buzz
- ❖ Our own Senior Leadership Team
- ❖ Our Safeguarding/Child Protection Lead
- ❖ Our SENDCO who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including children whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.

We believe the School has a key role in promoting children 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.
- ❖ Peer mediation and Peer mentoring – children working together to solve problems and planned sessions where identified adults mentor a designated child
- ❖ Friendship Squad – a lunchtime group supporting younger children at lunchtime.

#### Transition programmes

- ❖ Transition Programme to secondary schools which includes all Year 6 children having a staff mentor to support a smooth transition to secondary school

#### Class activities

- ❖ Praise boxes a mechanism where children can be praised for certain duties, tasks or things they have done and have them celebrated in class
- ❖ Worry boxes – a similar mechanism where children can anonymously share worries or concerns in class
- ❖ Circle times
- ❖ Wellbeing programmes for SEMH, as well as weekly circle times to help children learn personal, social and emotional, communication and problem solving skills.

#### Whole school

- ❖ Weekly discussions about mental health and wellbeing at every staff meeting
- ❖ Wellbeing week – whole school focus on doing things which make us feel good
- ❖ Mental health awareness days
- ❖ Displays and information around the School about positive mental health and where to go for help and support
- ❖ Peer Listeners
- ❖ Boxall assessment information
- ❖ Staff trained by Compass Buzz

## Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing

Through PSHCE we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help children to be more resilient, understand about mental health and be less affected by the stigma of mental health problems.

### **EYFS & Key Stage 1 children learn:**

- ❖ 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.

### **Key Stage 2 children learn:**

- ❖ What positively and negatively affects their mental and emotional health (including the media).
- ❖ Positive and healthy coping strategies.
- ❖ About good and not so good feelings.
- ❖ To describe the range and intensity of their feelings to others.
- ❖ To recognise and respond appropriately to a wide range of feelings in others.
- ❖ To recognise that they may experience conflicting emotions and when they might need to listen to their emotions or overcome them.
- ❖ About resilience.
- ❖ How to motivate themselves and bounce back if they fail at something.
- ❖ How to empathise and be supportive of others.
- ❖ About change, including transitions (between Key Stages and schools), loss, separation, divorce and bereavement.
- ❖ About the consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including online bullying, prejudice-based language), as well as how to respond and ask for help if they are victims of this themselves.
- ❖ About the importance of talking to someone 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 that the welfare and safety of children are paramount.
- ❖ Train children so that they can talk to each other and support one another through our 'Peer Listener' scheme.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Monitor, review and evaluate the support with children and keep parents and carers 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 including:

- ❖ Mental Health questionnaires.
- ❖ Analysing behaviour, exclusions, attendance and sanctions.
- ❖ Using Leuven scales to identify children in EYFS who need support.
- ❖ Staff report concerns about individual children to the relevant lead persons.
- ❖ Worry boxes in each class for children to raise concerns which are checked by the Class Teachers and Mental Health Lead (these are anonymous but give an indication of needs in a particular class regularly).
- ❖ Pupil Progress Review meetings termly
- ❖ Regular meetings for staff to raise concerns.
- ❖ Gathering information from a previous school at transfer.
- ❖ Enabling children to raise concerns to any member of staff.
- ❖ Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns to any member of staff.

Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the Mental Health Lead or the SENDCO.

These 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 the School's child protection procedures are followed. If there is a medical emergency then the School's procedures for medical emergencies are followed.

### Disclosures by children and confidentiality

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgemental to children who disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of our children is paramount and staff listen rather than advise. Staff make it clear to children that the concern will be shared with the Mental Health Lead or the Safeguarding Lead and recorded, in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil. All disclosures are recorded and held on 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.

### Assessment, Interventions and Support

All concerns are reported to the Mental Health Lead/SENCO and recorded. We then implement our assessment system, which is based on levels of need to ensure that children 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. Boxall assessments are used to give staff a baseline and to ensure that progress is made after interventions.

### 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. In the case of eating disorders and self-harm, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping strategies from each other, and we will consider on a case by case basis what support might be appropriate including one to one and group support.

We will involve the pupil who is suffering and their parents and consider what is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told, how they can best support, things they should avoid doing/saying which may inadvertently cause upset and warning signs that their friend needs help.

We will also make information available about where and how to access information and support for themselves and healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling.

#### Support for children after inpatient treatment

We recognise that some children will need ongoing support and the Lead for Social, Emotional & Mental Health Needs will meet with children on a regular basis. We are careful not to "label" children with diagnoses without prior and sensitive consultation with family/carers and other relevant professionals.

We have a duty of care to support children and will seek advice from medical staff and mental health professionals on the best way to support children. We will carry out a risk assessment and produce an Individual Care Plan to support children to re-integrate successfully back to school.

When a child leaves an inpatient provision and is transitioning back to school, we discuss what needs to happen so the transition will be smooth and positive.

#### Working with specialist services to get swift access to the right specialist support and treatment

In some case 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 to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the children's Individual Care Plan.

School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the Mental Health Lead or the SENCO following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents and carers. 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.

#### SEND and Mental Health

Persistent mental health problems may lead to children having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age. In some cases the child may benefit from being identified as having a special educational need (SEN).

#### Involving Parents and Carers - Promoting Mental Health

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, based on a list of risk factors pertaining to the child or family. It is very helpful if parents and carers can share information with the School so that we can better support their child from the outset. All information will be treated in confidence.

### To support parents and carers:

- ❖ We organise a range of activities such as workshops on protective and risk factors, craft clubs, computer skills club, and English as an additional language classes.
- ❖ We provide information and websites on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes and have produced leaflets for parents on mental health and resilience, which can be accessed on the School website. The information includes who parents can talk to if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child and where parents can access support for themselves.
- ❖ We include the mental health topics that are taught in the PSHCE curriculum section, on the School website
- ❖ When children start school, all parents and carers are given our mental health and resilience leaflet that includes information on how parents can support their child's mental health and where to go for help and support.

### Supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs

We are aware that parents and 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, that the school has experience of working with similar issues and that help and advice are available.

We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Our primary concern is the children, 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.

When a concern has been raised, the School will:

- ❖ Contact parents and carers and meet with them (*In almost all cases, parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as where child protection issues are identified.*)
- ❖ Offer information to take away and places to seek further information
- ❖ Be available for follow up calls.
- ❖ Make a record of the meeting.
- ❖ Agree a mental health Individual Care Plan including clear next steps.
- ❖ 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 provided.

## Involving children

We have a Pupil Leadership, who lead on whole school campaigns on health and wellbeing. We seek pupil's views about our approach, curriculum and in promoting whole school mental health activities.

We always seek feedback from children who have had support to help improve that support and the services they received.

We also train children to act as 'Peer Listeners.' These children act as listeners to children who want to talk about a problem.

## 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, such as celebrating Time to Talk Day, staff craft club, and our Social Committee (responsible for organising team building events both physical and non-physical). We have 'duvet week' to ensure all staff leave work early for at least one week, to support that work-life balance. Staff also have access to Health ????

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The mental health and wellbeing policy is on the school website and hard copies are available to parents and carers from the school office. All mental health professionals are given a copy before they begin working with the school as well as external agencies involved in our mental health work.

The policy is monitored at an annual review meeting led by the Mental Health Lead/SENCO and involves staff with a responsibility for mental health, including support staff and the school governors.