



# Positive Mental Health Policy

## Blackfordby St Margaret's C of E Primary School

Last Updated: October 2024

### Defining mental health

Mental Health is *"the emotional and spiritual resilience which enables us to enjoy life and survive pain, suffering and disappointment. It is a positive sense of wellbeing and an underlying belief in our and others dignity and worth. It is influenced by our experience and our genetic inheritance."* (World Health Organisation)

Mental health affects all aspects of life and behaviour.

Like physical health, mental health is something we all have. It can range across a spectrum from healthy to unwell; it can fluctuate on a daily basis and change over time.

### Mental health spectrum



Adapted from Centre for Mental Health

### Context and Rationale

Mental Health and Wellbeing promotes school success and improvements by:

- Promoting positive mental and emotional wellbeing by providing information and support.
- Creating a shared understanding of all aspects of mental health.
- Enabling those with mental health related issues to self-disclose and seek support in a safe confidential manner.
- Offering guidance and strategies to support pupils and staff to be mentally healthy.
- Creating a culture to support and maintain positive mental health and wellbeing.

### Aims of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to have:

#### General:

Resilient, happier and more motivated pupils and staff who get more out of life, a learning community that withholds their core values and principles, encompassing the school aims and motto, *'Working our way to wisdom; learning our way for life.'*

- In General, good mental health helps children:
- Learn and explore the world.
- Feel, express and manage a range of positive and negative emotions.
- Form and maintain good relationships with others.
- Cope with, and manage change and uncertainty.
- Develop and thrive.

#### **Teaching and Learning:**

- Pupils who are more engaged in the learning process and are willing to take a 'risk' and accept challenge.
- Pupils who can concentrate and engage with learning.
- Improved standards in a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Improved attainment.
- More effective teaching that is consistently good or better.
- Parents and carers who are more involved in school life and the learning process.

#### **Behaviour and Attendance:**

- Pupils with high self-esteem, confidence and resilience who are able to problem-solve and take risks.
- Pupils who have a voice in what happens in their learning.
- More engaged learners that are prepared for the future.
- Good concentration, behaviour and attendance.
- Positive peer relationships.

#### **Staff Confidence and Development:**

- High morale and positivity.
- Staff with a sound mental health and wellbeing leading to lower absenteeism.
- Stable, content and consistent workforce.
- Positive and effective relationships with pupils and colleagues.
- **Policy statement**

Blackfordby St Margaret's Primary School is committed to promoting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of pupils and staff. In order to do so the school will:

#### **Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing (Prevention):**

- Promote knowledge and understanding of both internal and external support services.
- Encourage and support the whole school community to be positive in its approach to mental health wellbeing.
- Provide guidance and support to all those connected with the organisation to help them develop confidence in their ability to manage mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Provide appropriate training and information to staff on mental health and emotional wellbeing.

- Have named Mental Health Leads who are the contact point at Blackfordby Community Primary School and a Pastoral team who are responsible for co-ordination and delivery of the school's mental health and emotional wellbeing strategy.
- Seek to embed mental health and emotional support across the curriculum.
- Keep this policy under review and make changes when legislation and best practice requires.

#### **Addressing Needs (mechanisms to support children and staff):**

- Promote a culture which supports and encourages self-disclosure.
  - Use the 'Mental Health Spectrum' to identify children that fall into the 'struggling' and 'unwell' mental health categories and seek support from the school's Wellbeing Lead, Cheryl Pryce.
  - Provide a framework for responding appropriately to mental health wellbeing.
  - Recognise that staff have the responsibility to alert others to potential and actual indicators of mental health needs and to take this action whenever necessary. For pupils, through our Wellbeing referral support system and Bromcom system following our Safeguarding Policy and for staff, via their Key Stage Leader or the Senior Leadership Team.
  - Co-operate with other organisations involved in the delivery of mental health and emotional support services.
  - Observe the principles of confidentiality and general data protection in respect of mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- **Lead Members of Staff**

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

- Hayley Ryder-Smith (Executive Head teacher)- Designated Child Protection / Designated Safeguarding Lead Health and Safety Lead
- Danielle Ridley (Senior Teacher)-Designated Assistant Child Protection / Designated Deputy Safeguarding Lead/ Mental Health Lead / Pastoral Lead
- Zoe Horne (Senior Teacher)-Designated Assistant Child Protection / Designated Deputy Safeguarding Lead/ Mental Health Lead / Pastoral Lead
- Rachel Culpan - SEND Co

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the Mental Health Lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Designated Assistant Safeguarding Lead. Any other Safeguarding concerns that are non-urgent should be recorded via Bromcom.

#### **Warning Signs of Poor Mental Health**

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student 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 either Zoe Horne or Danielle Ridley, our Mental Health and Wellbeing Leads and a 'Wellbeing Referral Form' completed.

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
- 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
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause ✓ An increase in lateness or absenteeism

### Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of the support that we can offer as a school around mental health and wellbeing.

Following any concerns raised by a member of staff or a parent, a 'Wellbeing Referral Form' must be completed by the class teacher and given to the Wellbeing Lead. Following this, staff that know the child well, will meet to decide on actions including any tools/questionnaires to inform the best course of action/plan.

A Wellbeing Plan will be devised for the child that outlines how the school can best support the child. Wellbeing and mental health interventions will then be tailored to meet these unmet needs. Following a block of interventions and classroom strategies put in place, a further Questionnaires or will be completed to measure impact and progress and the Wellbeing Plan will be reviewed. If the impact is positive and progress towards the Wellbeing Plan is positive, the child can continue to be supported in the classroom and the child will be monitored. However, if the impact and progress towards the Wellbeing Plan is not deemed satisfactory and the child continues to display unmet needs, further interventions will be offered to the child and the process repeated.

In the event of limited impact and progress after two cycles of interventions, the school will refer the child to our support workers/ to other outside agencies as appropriate.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputies must be informed immediately and the school's safeguarding procedures must be adhered to.

### Working with 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 monthly Wellbeing Newsletter
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to if they have concerns about their child
- Make our mental health and wellbeing policy easily accessible to parents

- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular parent drop-ins and workshops
- 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

## **Training**

All staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues throughout the year through Professional Development meetings and INSET day training. Any staff requiring further professional development should make their suggestions to our CPD Coordinator /Pastoral Lead, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.