



MOORFIELD
SCHOOL

MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

Whole School Policy including EYFS



MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

Introduction

This policy was written in consultation with the Pastoral Lead, SENDCO, Head of EYFS and Mental Health Lead. Although much of the policy covers provision made for supporting the children in school, the school ethos and aims referred to in the policy also includes support for the mental health and well-being of staff and in terms of addressing staff well-being, this policy should be read in conjunction with the school's *Occupational Stress Policy*.

Policy Statement

At Moorfield School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and well-being of our pupils and staff. We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, 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. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

At Moorfield we:

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings 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 staff to work collaboratively and support each other
- create a culture where staff are listened to if they have concerns

We promote a mentally healthy environment for staff and children through:

- promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
- promoting pupil and staff 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
- make sure staff and children have a range of ways to indicate they may want to talk to an adult in school eg, feelings boards, worry box and virtual worry box
- ensuring a sense of worth
- providing opportunities for children to take some time out
- providing opportunities for staff to take some time out if they are struggling
- provide a quiet place for staff and children to take a breather and some time out (section at the back of the library to be earmarked for this)

We pursue our aims through:

- universal, whole school approaches
- support for children and staff going through recent difficulties including bereavement.
- for staff, being aware of each other, encourage a buddy system
- buddy to communicate to Head/SLT or rest of staff as appropriate on behalf of colleague (at their request).
- encouraging topics for whole school which can provide opportunities to talk, particularly about own experiences if appropriate.
- creating relevant and appropriate resources, such as a pack of scenarios, which can be used to initiate discussions. Mental Health Lead to oversee this and train staff in using them.
- specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long term difficulties, for example, attachment disorder.

Scope

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the SEND policy and pupil information regarding any medical issues in cases where pupils mental health needs overlap with these. This policy is also to be read in conjunction with policies for Behaviour, Anti-bullying, and PSHE. It should also sit alongside child protection procedures.

Lead members of staff

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

Tina Herbert - Head and DSL (including DSL for EYFS)

Lydney Rix – Pastoral Lead and Deputy DSL (including Deputy DSL for EYFS)

Hetty McMurray – SENDCO

Nicola Minshall – Head of EYFS

Alison Lesurf – Mental Health Lead

Teaching about mental health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our children to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of cohorts, but we will also use the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional well-being issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

Sensitive and tricky subjects can be addressed if they are raised naturally by the children, (*See Relationships and Sex Education – Managing Tricky Questions*).

For specific difficulties:-

- class teachers may have to discuss with parents first if a sensitive/tricky subject comes up
- teachers to seek advice from DSL before discussing a difficult subject
- children may need to speak to the school nursing services as appropriate

Targeted support

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

- circle time approaches or 'circle of friends' activities.
- targeted use of PSHE resources
- managing feelings resources e.g. 'worry boxes' 'feelings boards'
- primary Group Work/Mental health and wellbeing groups eg, Young Minds
- therapeutic activities including art, lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques.
- make children aware of places and people they can go to by putting this information on display via appropriate posters
- visitors from professional organisations/mental health charities to talk about the help they could offer
- mindfulness workshops
- making sure children are aware of the quiet place they can go if needed, including at lunchtimes

The school will assess and track well-being as appropriate including:

- recording and logging concerns through the DSL
- make a note about follow up on Individual Pupil Folders
- record any concerns from the Worry Box
- class teachers to follow up Worry Box issues in individual pupil folders (pupil notes)
- recording and monitoring mental health/well-being issues in pupil folders
- raise pastoral/mental health issues in every staff meeting and Senior Leadership Meeting
- staff raise any issues with Mental Health Lead
- using the Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire as an initial assessment
- in classrooms, children have an age appropriate system for monitoring their own well-being, for example, all forms have a 'how am I feeling chart' which the children access first thing in the morning. Younger children already use the The Colour Monster and coloured stones, older children may use the worry box in the library or the virtual worry box on the school website

Identifying needs and warning signs

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which indicate a child or colleague is experiencing mental health or emotional well-being issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the designated child protection and safeguarding lead, pastoral lead or mental health lead.

Possible warning signs include:

- changes in eating / sleeping habits
- becoming socially withdrawn
- changes in activity and mood

- talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- irrational fears and thoughts
- repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- an increase in lateness or absenteeism
- change in attitude to learning

Working with parents

The relationship between staff and parents is particularly important as there may well be family circumstances which link with a change in mental health. Parents will need opportunities to have confidential discussions with staff about any change in family circumstances.

In order to support parents we will:

- highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional well-being
- ensure that all parents are aware of whom 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
- share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.
- 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.

Working with other agencies and partners

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies, when appropriate, to support children's emotional health and well-being including:

- School Nursing services
- Educational psychology services
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Therapists

Staff mental health 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.

- all staff will complete the Educare 'Mental Health and Well-being for Young People and Children'
- Alison Lesurf will undertake training as part of her role as Mental Health Lead.
- staff will be trained in how to use the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire

- staff also encouraged to complete the Educare course 'Mental Health and Well-being for staff'

Drafted by: Head, Pastoral Lead and DSL, Mental Health Lead, SENDCO,
Head of EYFS

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