



Willow Wood Community Primary School

Mental Health and Well-being Policy

Rationale

According to the World Health Organisation, '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.'

At Willow Wood Community Primary School positive Mental Health and Well-being is paramount. We aim to promote positive mental health and well-being for all of our staff, pupils and parents. We deliver this through a range of teaching methods and the supportive networks we have throughout the whole school.

This policy is underpinned by the school ethos where we thrive to inspire pupils and each other to be the best that we can be, believe in each other and ourselves, challenge ourselves to excel and achieve greatness, and, achieve in all that we do. When we are able to achieve these aspects then pupils are more engaged in their learning which means that teaching is more effective. Overall a person is happier, motivated and settled.

We have an understanding that mental health works on a continuum and we can move back and forth along the scale at different times during our lives; even throughout the day. 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. SEMH is something that tends to also work on a continuum, seeing our pupils needs change from day to day.



The Department for Education (DfE) identifies that,

“In order to help their pupils succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy”.

Our school is a safe haven for all pupils where they are free to explore and learn. We have a vast curriculum which supports the delivery of quality first teaching in order to help pupils identify positive mental health and ways in which to support themselves and others. This incorporates our 'Building Learning Power' principles within the classrooms, staff awareness of ACEs and emotional differentiation techniques practiced as well as school having a trained school counsellor, mental health first aider and working with numerous agencies.

At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable at times and anyone can need additional emotional support, this includes staff, parents and children.

Staff responsibility

Mental health and well-being is the responsibility of all staff however, when a child has reoccurring issues staff will then pass this concern over to either:

Lindsay Robertson – Headteacher

Warren Dawson (SENDCO and Deputy Headteacher)

Claire Lonsdale (Family Support and Well-being Worker)

The child is then assessed at a school level and the appropriate support and referrals will be put in place. Close contact is also kept with parents/ carers in order to support the child at home also.

Lead members of staff for mental health and well being

Claire Lonsdale - Well-being and Family Support Worker, Mental Health First Aider and Well-being Champion

Lindsay Robertson – Lead Well-being Champion

Sarah Beavis – Well-being Champion

Claire Lonsdale - Well-being Champion

Our Well-being and Family Support Worker, Claire Lonsdale, and staff work closely with both pupils and parents in order to support their needs. We:

- Help pupils to better understand their emotions and feelings
- Encourage pupils to feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- Enable pupils to form and maintain relationships with both peers and staff
- Promote self-esteem and ensure pupils know that they count
- Encourage pupils to be confident and 'dare to be different'
- Help pupils to develop emotional resilience and to appropriately manage setbacks

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging

- Promoting pupil 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

We pursue our aims through:

- Universal, whole school approaches
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties e.g. bereavement, anxiety
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties including attachment disorder and trauma

Curriculum

It is now statutory (from September 2020), that all year groups from reception to Year 6 complete lessons throughout the year based on emotions, mental health and their development.

Through our PSHE, RSE and Jigsaw curriculum, mental health and well-being is taught to all pupils throughout the school. These lessons are supplemented by visits from other professionals e.g. school nurses. The PSHE curriculum is split into 6 themes which are used throughout year. They are based on the development of the child and each area is age appropriate; developing the pupils' knowledge and skills each year as they develop in understanding and maturity.

There are weekly planned assemblies that are based around emotions and mental health in order to give the pupils the knowledge and self-regulation strategies.

Targeted Support

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

- Circle time approaches
- Targeted use of PSHE Jigsaw resources
- Managing feelings resources e.g. worry boxes, worry monsters, assembly stories
- Managing emotions resources e.g. Incredible Years
- Direct 1:1 sessions
- Counselling support
- Small group work
- Relax Kids
- Friends For Life sessions

- Therapeutic activities e.g. mindfulness techniques
- Sand Story Skills
- Mental Health First Aid
- Assigned Healthy Heads practitioner based on site one day per week
- Sourcing funding to help our families purchase much needed goods for the home
- Telephone support for parents.
- If it is then identified that the need is greater; appropriate signposting and referrals will be made to the relevant services such as CAMHS, Emotional Resilience 0-19 Service and the Healthy Heads team who already work closely with our school.

We will make sure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support

Identifying needs and warning signs

If a concern arises involving a child or family this will firstly be discussed with schools fully trained DSL's who are, the Head Teacher and Family Support Worker. Detailed notes are then kept which are easily accessible if a concern needs to be referred onto another service in order to gain further support. Triggers for concern may include the following:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach and attitude to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Changes in family circumstances
- Bereavement
- Health indicators
- Changes to 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
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional difficulties. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing them communicate their concerns swiftly in order to identify the best course of action to take.

Working with other agencies and partners

A key aspect of our provision is our work with a number of outside agencies to support us to support the mental health of our pupils. These may include:

- School nursing team
- Health visitors
- Educational psychology
- Behaviour support team
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS / CYPS
- Counselling services
- Family support workers / Early Help / Together for Children
- Therapists

Working with parents

In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional well-being on our school noticeboards and website
- Share, support and allow parents to access further support
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to and how to go about accessing support if they have concerns about themselves or their child
- Make our emotional well-being 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 mental health topics their pupils are learning about in PSHE and RSE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home
- Promote mental health week and other events school is involved in and the learning involved so that parents can open discussions with their children

Staff Well-being

Within school we have a Well-being Team who meet regularly to discuss and identify ways to help support the well-being of our staff. Staff have the ability to use the team as a support network and request certain things to be introduced, amended or considered within school. Items highlighted by the well-being team are taken to the headteacher and SLT for consideration and feedback given to the team. Well-being is also a standing agenda item on governor meetings and is addressed in all termly headteacher reports. Staff are also made aware of help available to them e.g. well-being sessions hosted by the council, counselling via the school absence insurance provider and occupational health.

Achievements and training

As a school we are very proud to say that after a lot of hard work we now hold the bronze award in Mental Health Charter award. A vast amount of work went into this and we are very proud to show all of the positive work we do in order to support our pupils, staff and parents. Our next step is to aim to achieve the silver award.

Staff have regular training around mental health and well-being in order to build upon their knowledge base so they can support our pupils to the best of their ability. They are educated to a high standard and are aware when to pass on issues which cannot be supported by the class teacher only.

The skills, knowledge and understanding that our pupils need to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. This then informs our planning which is fed through at every year group. Some examples include-

- Recognise the signs that they are starting to feel angry (both inside and outside of the body),
- Make someone else feel good by giving them a compliment,
- Manage their own frustrations by using a number of strategies,
- Managing their feelings and identifying find a way to calm themselves down when necessary

All staff are trained in ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and this informs our practice on a daily basis. It is important to understand that pupils' behaviour is a form of communication and all staff at Willow Wood Primary Community School have a clear understanding of this, in turn, pupils are then fully supported in order to meet their needs.

When a child is having a particular issue relating to their mental health or receive a diagnosis then a support plan is created. This includes the views of school staff, the child and professionals. The plan will also include:

- Details of the pupil's condition
- Special requirements and triggers
- Advice for managing and associated behaviours
- Medication and any side effects
- Strategies and resources

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered in line with their role or as part of the appraisal process.

What to do if you are worried about your child

The first port of call if you are worried about your child's mental health and well-being is your GP however, there are numerous quality services which offer support, some of these are: -

- Healthy Heads – speak to Mrs Lonsdale in school about considering a referral to Health Heads, they offer early intervention to help children, young people and their families who are struggling with mild to moderate anxiety and/or depression. Mental Health Support Service: Healthy Heads Team :: South Tyneside and Sunderland Mental Health Services
- Kooth – offers emotional and mental health support for pupils and young people aged between 10 – 24 years and is available up to 10pm every day. <https://www.kooth.com/>
- CCAMHS – The Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CCAMHS) is there to help pupils and young people up to 18 years old, and their families in Sunderland. <https://www.sunderlandcommunitycamhs.nhs.uk/about-us/>
- CYPS - The Pupils and Young People's Service provides a single service to all pupils and young people aged 0-18 years living in South Tyneside and Sunderland who present with mental health difficulties. This includes pupils and young people who may have learning difficulties and those living in a range of difficult and challenging circumstances. <https://www.cntw.nhs.uk/services/pupils-young-peoples-service-south-tyneside-sunderland/>
- Washington Mind - Washington Mind's mission is to work in partnership with our community to promote recovery and improve mental health and well-being. They offer a range of services from online support to counselling sessions. <https://www.washingtonmind.org.uk/>
- Other services are accessed on an assessment of the child / family need.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Policy, Anti-Bullying, Online Bullying, Relationships and Sex Education, and, SEND Policy.