



MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING POLICY

Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: May 2023
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'Striving for Excellence. Achieving Together'

At Harrington Hill Primary School, we recognise that wellbeing is all about our holistic health, including the physical and emotional. When we have good levels of wellbeing, we feel that life is in balance and that we can generally cope well. We feel motivated and engaged, we are resilient and able to deal effectively with daily troubles, as well as 'bounce back' from life's challenges.

Good Mental Health helps children to:

- 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

Building strong mental health early in life can help children build their self-esteem, learn to settle themselves and engage positively with their education. This, in turn, can lead to improved academic attainment, enhanced future employment opportunities and positive life choices.

At Harrington Hill Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil community. We aim to help pupils to develop essential social and emotional skills. Bespoke teaching sessions, assemblies, curriculum opportunities and enrichment opportunities will cultivate these skills and understand and manage thoughts, feelings and behaviour. We will pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. We recognise that in an average UK classroom, three children may be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures, we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly, by mental ill health.

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors. This policy should be read in conjunction with our SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need or medical need.

This Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents

Lead Members of Staff

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

- **Rebecca Kennedy** – Head of School, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- **Pete Brodie**– Deputy Headteacher, SENco, Mental Health Lead, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- **Aysu Ozdemir** – Learning Mentor (LM)
- Wellbeing and Mental Health in School (WAMHS) link worker

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the mental health lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSLs. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Mental Health Lead.

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing for Children at Harrington Hill

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHCE curriculum (JIGSAW). The specific content of lessons will be determined by the curriculum and the specific needs of the cohort being taught but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others. Mental Health and wellbeing will also feature as part of assemblies.

A number of parenting sessions will be available annually to ensure there is a supportive space to discuss common issues parents face.

Wellbeing in Class

Wellbeing is a priority in all classes at Harrington Hill. We ensure this is the case by having a Worry Box in every classroom, in which children can post a note if they are upset or worried about something but feel they cannot, or do not want to, approach an adult. In every classroom we also have a Zones of Regulation chart, which the children use on a daily basis. As well as the Jigsaw lessons, the children are encouraged to take part in daily mindfulness activities.



Wellbeing Champions

Each year, four pupils are nominated to be Wellbeing Champions. Our Learning Mentor works closely with the team to promote key wellbeing messages and consider any improvements that can be made to further improve the wellbeing of children and staff across the school. The Wellbeing Champions usually have a project on the go – this has included the introduction of a Buddy Bench in the playground.

Wellbeing Week

In Autumn term and Summer term we hold a Wellbeing week in school. During this week the children are taught about mental health and Wellbeing, and take part in a range of activities to improve their mental health. The week focussing on promoting the 5 Ways to Wellbeing:



Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools (WAMHS) project

The Mental Health Lead works closely with the CAMHS in school representative as part of the WAMHS project to develop a Wellbeing Framework Action plan for the school, which is reviewed termly. This ensures Wellbeing is a priority for the school and our approach to Wellbeing and Mental Health is constantly improving.

The Mental Health Lead also works closely with the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) worker do deliver a range of interventions to groups in school. These focus on topics such as managing emotions, friendships and dealing with change.

Therapeutic support

We currently have a therapist that works one day a week in school. The therapy sessions might include group work, individual sessions, art projects, drama activities and/or talking through things. All therapeutic work is designed to improve emotional well-being, ability to communicate and express ideas and feelings, to help reach academic potential and to feel connected to and supported by the school.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what sources of support within school and in the local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it. We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas, on the school website and through our social media channels.

Warning Signs

School staff will be trained on recognising warning signs which indicate a pupil 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 using My Concern.

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
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- 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

All disclosures and concerns will be recorded on My Concern and should include:

- Date
- Full name of the pupil
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Actions to be taken

This information should be shared with a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will inform the Mental Health Lead, decide on the appropriate next steps and store the record. A triage meeting between DSLs will take place at least half termly to discuss active and new cases.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we feel it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on then we would normally, if age-appropriate, discuss this with the pupil:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Mental Health Lead, as this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents must always be informed and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the pupil should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents may not be informed depending on the individual case, but the DSL must be informed immediately.

Working with Parents

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents, we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's difficulties, and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect. We should always highlight further sources of information and give them further information to read (e.g. helplines, forums etc.) as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. We should always provide a clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

Working with All 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 school website.

- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get help about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child.
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through information sessions.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHCE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.
- Provide workshops for discussion around themes suggested by parents.

Training

As a minimum, 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 pupils safe.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health. Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the Mental Health Lead.

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing for Staff at Harrington Hill

As school staff juggle a multitude of different tasks and demands, it is important that everyone is given the right emotional and practical support so that they can, in turn, support their pupils.

In addition to having a positive impact on colleagues and children, staff wellbeing can improve performance and job satisfaction, which can lead to reduced staff turnover. It can also help to reduce absence (both short and long term), increase productivity and promote staff engagement.

We hope that Harrington Hill Primary school's caring ethos and environment will have a major impact on the wellbeing of its staff and pupils. The leaders define that culture and vision of the school and make it clear what behaviours, values and beliefs underpin it. The leaders of the school work hard to build a culture of trust where staff feels valued, can be open about their health and wellbeing and know how to access support if they need it.

Staff are signposted to external support available to them. Regular 'check in' meetings ensure there is a specified time for staff to discuss their responsibilities and Wellbeing with members of the SLT and to share any issues they are having and their plans for the future which school endeavours to support.

Harrington Hill Primary school ensures that a number of activities to support wellbeing are provided for staff during each academic year, including giving each member of staff a Wellbeing Day and including lots of activities for staff during the school Wellbeing Weeks.

Role of all staff

All staff are expected to:

- Treat each other with empathy and respect
- Keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of other members of staff
- Support other members of staff if they become stressed, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let other members of staff know when they need support
- Contribute positively towards morale and team spirit

- Use shared areas respectfully, such as the staff room or offices
- Take part in training opportunities that promote their wellbeing

Role of line managers

Line managers are expected to:

- Maintain positive relationships with their staff and value them for their skills, not their working pattern
- Provide a non-judgemental and confidential support system to their staff
- Take any complaints or concerns seriously and deal with them appropriately using the school's policies
- Monitor workloads and be alert to signs of stress, and regularly talk to staff about their work/life balance
- Hold regular 'Check In' meetings with each staff member they line manage
- Make sure new staff are properly and thoroughly inducted and feel able to ask for help
- Understand that personal issues and pressures at work may have a temporary effect on work performance, and take that into account during any appraisal or capability procedures
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Help to arrange personal and professional development training where appropriate
- Keep in touch with staff if they're absent for long periods
- Monitor staff sickness absence, and have support meetings with them if any patterns emerge
- Conduct return to work interviews to support staff back into work
- Conduct exit interviews with resigning staff to help identify any wellbeing issues that lead to their resignation

Role of senior staff

The Senior Leadership Team are expected to:

- Lead in setting standards for conduct, including how they treat other members of staff and adhering to agreed working hours
- Manage a non-judgemental and confidential support system for staff
- Monitor the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations
- Make sure accountability systems are based on trust and professional dialogue, with proportionate amounts of direct monitoring
- Regularly review the demands on staff, such as the time spent on paperwork, and seek alternative solutions wherever possible
- Make sure job descriptions are kept up-to-date, with clearly identified responsibilities and staff being consulted before any changes
- Listen to the views of staff and involve them in decision-making processes, including allowing them to consider any workload implications of new initiatives
- Communicate new initiatives effectively with all members of staff to ensure they feel included and aware of any changes occurring at the school
- Make sure that the efforts and successes of staff are recognised and celebrated
- Produce calendars of meetings, deadlines and events so that staff can plan ahead and manage their workload
- Provide resources to promote staff wellbeing, such as training opportunities
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Organise extra support during times of stress, such as Ofsted inspections

Role of the governing board

The governing board is expected to:

- Make sure the school is fulfilling its duty of care as an employer, such as by giving staff a reasonable workload and creating a supportive work environment
- Monitor and support the wellbeing of the Head of School
- Ensure that resources and support services are in place to promote staff wellbeing
- Make decisions and review policies with staff wellbeing in mind, particularly in regards to workload
- Be reasonable about the format and quantity of information asked for from staff as part of monitoring work
- Ensure that staff are clear about the purpose of any monitoring visits and what information will be required from them

Managing specific wellbeing issues

The school will support and discuss options with any staff that raises wellbeing issues, such as if they are experiencing significant stress at school or in their personal lives. Where possible, support will be given by line managers or senior staff. This could be through:

- Giving staff time off to deal with a personal crisis
- Arranging external support, such as counselling or occupational health services
- Completing a risk assessment and following through with any actions identified
- Reassessing their workload and deciding what tasks to prioritise
- At all times, the confidentiality and dignity of staff will be maintained.

Policy Review and Action Planning

The school will commit to writing an action plan each year to audit and improve the school's wellbeing responsibilities. This will be done with the WAMHS worker. We will talk to children and our stakeholders to collect meaningful information. This policy will be reviewed annually.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to our Mental Health Lead.

Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Appraisal policy
- Behaviour policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Equality and Inclusion policy

Further useful reading

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728892/government-response-to-consultation-on-transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health.pdf

<https://www.annafreud.org/media/4612/mwb-toolki-final-draft-4.pdf> (toolkit)

