



Mental Health and Emotional Well-being Policy

Version	Date	Author	Status	Summary
3.0	September 2024	Lauren English	Approved	Addition of staff wellbeing section
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Annually		FGB		September 2025

Intent

It is our fundamental belief that without the secure foundation of emotional security children are not able to learn, progress or achieve their full potential. It is therefore our unequivocal responsibility to ensure that children not only feel emotionally safe and nurtured whilst in our care, but also learn to appreciate and safeguard their own mental health. The use of the term 'safeguard' here is used with absolute intention; good mental health and emotional well-being will play a crucial role in keeping our children safe whilst in our school and after they have left us.

Ensuring the emotional well-being of our pupils, staff and families is an ongoing priority for our school, which includes every member of staff and the governing body. Our core values underpin our approach to the promotion of the positive mental health of all stakeholders, and these are:

Be kind. Be confident. Love learning.

The order of our core values is not accidental. In our every action and interaction we promote the absolute importance of being kind – to others, but also, crucially, to ourselves. Whilst much of how we safeguard the emotional well-being of our pupils and staff is intuitive and implicit, there is much that necessarily must be considered and planned for explicitly, operationally and strategically.

Aims of the policy

The aims of this policy are to make clear:

- How we promote and support positive mental health in the whole School community;
- How we identify and support children with mental health needs;
- How we support whole families in dealing with children's mental health problems;
- How we support staff in spotting early warning signs in children and addressing mental health problems.

Legislation and Statutory Requirements

This policy reflects the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education. It also reflects 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions,' 'Promoting the health and wellbeing of looked after children', as well as advice for school staff on 'Mental health and behaviour in schools'.

Links with other policies

The Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and Hampshire guidance:

- PSHEE Policy
- RSE Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies
- HCC Menopause Guidance in the MoPP

Policy availability

As with all of our policies, a paper copy can be obtained via the school office.

Implementation

The school has a Senior Mental Health Lead who is Lauren English. General queries should come to her but specific questions or concerns about a child's mental health should in the first instance be talked through with their class teacher.

Universal support

- The school's core values and Learning Powers are taught explicitly and are reinforced by all staff. Our Learning Powers are:
 - ★ Explore ★ Aim high ★ Celebrate difference ★ It's good to be me ★
 - ★ Teamwork ★ Make mistakes ★ Persevere ★ Have a go ★
- Explicit teaching in PSHE/RSHE lessons around mental health, providing children with a vocabulary for speaking about their emotions.

- All classes have a Colour Monster chart for recording their emotions. This promotes understanding that all emotions are valid and should be shared (staff – including office staff and HT - also share their emotions on these charts), and prompts questions about how they are from peers and staff.
- Staff actively model and talk about how we ourselves utilise Learning Powers as often children have a perception that grown-ups – especially those in school – do not have the same struggles, self-doubt or emotional turbulence as they do, and it is important that they understand that these are normal to all.
- Classroom staff have informal, unplanned PSHE sessions or 'circle times' when needed to respond to issues that are going on in the classroom or beyond school.
- The voice of the child is hugely important to us, and children know that adults are interested in them and in what they have to say.
- Children in Year 2 complete a nine week yoga programme, which includes breathing exercises that they are encouraged to use at other times when needed, e.g. for calming down.
- Play is of huge importance in our school. Planned time for play – in addition to scheduled break times - is in place for all year groups, allowing time to socialise, explore their own interests and, if needed, have quiet solitary time with a book or activity.
- It is important for us that each class has their own Lunchtime Supervisor as this means that these key staff are also able to get to know 'their' children and notice changes in behaviours, particularly with regard to issues relating to friendships, play or eating and discussing them with the classroom staff.

Targeted support

We have face-to-face contact with the majority of our parents on a daily basis, fostering our working relationship and encouraging sharing of the 'smaller' matters and niggles that children, parents or staff might have, thus often resulting in issues that could become more problematic being resolved quickly. Where there are more serious or ongoing worries, parents and carers are encouraged to meet with staff to discuss what is going on in more detail. The headteacher also greets the children and their adults every morning at the gate, and is thus easily 'available' to talk with parents and carers.

We offer a range of support through targeted approaches to individual children or groups of pupils, which may include:

- Ad-hoc PSHE/Circle time
- Spending time with Iolo the school dog
- Time with a trusted adult
- Managing feelings resources such as the Worry Monsters

We also are lucky to have ELSAs in school, who can work with individuals or groups of children on an ad-hoc basis but more often work with individual children who have been referred to them by the class teacher. More detailed information about the ELSA provision we offer can be found on our [website](#).

The context of our school also brings with it its own challenges; with around 30% of our children who have a parent in the armed forces, deployment and postings to new schools is a unavoidable issue that potentially impacts the mental health of our children and their families. With many of the staff married into or from a Service background themselves, there is a good level of understanding about how an upcoming deployment or move to a new school impacts a child – and their parents – emotionally. The children receive knitted dolls of their parents and the parent going away has a knitted version of the child to take with them. Each week one of our ELSAs runs a Deployment Club for those children – Service or not – who have a parent away for a considerable length of time. We recognise that the emotional impact on the child is not just for the exact length of time of the deployment; the build up to a parent going away, as well as the 'come-down' after the parent has returned, are times when the child may still require additional support from the Club. Likewise, we work with children who are moving to or from Buryfields, before the actual move date, through the use of our Transition Packs. Further information on our offer for Service pupils can be found on our [website](#).

Identification of need

Staff in our school know the pupils well. There are a range of signs that may indicate a wellbeing concern, which include:

- Attendance and punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning and school in general
- Changes in behaviour
- Physical indicators, including eating behaviour changes

- Family circumstances, including deployment
- Health

As required, and usually in conjunction with outside agencies, we will also use specific assessment resources including strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs), emotional literacy scales and The Boxall Profile.

Partnership with other agencies

Whilst the majority of our provision for the promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing for our pupils, staff and families can be and is catered for ourselves, there are times when we need the support or advice of outside agencies.

- Educational Psychologist Service
- School Nurse
- Home-Start Hampshire
- Early Help Hub
- Primary Behaviour Support
- CAMHS
- The Hive at RAF Odiham

Working with parents and carers

We recognise that, just as the children are all individuals, each of our families join us with different sets of circumstances, and who may at any time be going through their own difficulties. That children's mental health and wellbeing is directly impacted by the mental health of their parents and carers is uncontested, and so whilst ensuring the mental health of our children's families is not our responsibility per se, the school recognises that there is much that we can do to support and contribute to positive wellbeing. This can be as simple as treating our parents and carers with respect, courtesy and compassion, taking time to listen and talk with them about matters directly relating to their child or about other concerns affecting the family. It can be allowing the child of a parent with social anxiety into school earlier to help them avoid crowds, or running a curriculum session with them individually, rather than expecting them to come to a busy evening event. It can be also be as simple as calling to let the parent know that their child has settled well if they have had a tricky start to the day.

Where relevant we will signpost parents to useful websites, books or outside agencies; where appropriate we will also refer families to external support, for example Home Start, the Early Help Hub or the school nursing team. Signposting can be done individually, by either the classroom staff or headteacher, but also via the website.

Staff wellbeing

The wellbeing of the school staff is of vital importance, and is taken very seriously by leaders and governors. It is a standing item on all staff meeting agendas and the half-termly Headteacher's Report to Governors.

School leaders are proactive in looking for ways in which staff wellbeing can be supported, e.g. reducing unnecessary workload, providing designated time for report writing etc. School staff complete a survey each year, and responses are carefully reviewed and discussed, with changes being made where possible and appropriate.

School staff are encouraged to speak with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher if they have any wellbeing concerns and they also have free access to Employee Support (Employee Assistance Programme). The school refers staff as needed to Occupational Health, and follows any given guidance from them, and also from the Manual of Personnel Practice, for example with regards to the menopause.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

The governing body will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation. The governing body will also ensure that there is a nominated wellbeing governor, who has responsibility for working with the headteacher and staffing team to monitor mental health and wellbeing of all stakeholders. It is the responsibility of the HTPM panel to discuss the wellbeing and workload of the Headteacher.

Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and:

- To ensure that outside agencies are consulted in good time, and that the school works effectively with them
- To ensure that appropriate CPD for all staff is provided, regularly and in response to events or trends.

Classroom based staff

All staff in school need to have an understanding of the impact that they have on the emotional wellbeing of our pupils, although we recognise that the responsibility rests predominantly with the classroom staff and as such included in their annual targets for performance management.

Office staff

As the initial point of contact for our families, the office staff set the tone for our relationship with parents and children; for us it is absolutely essential that parents know that they are respected, and to deal with them with unfailing courtesy and empathy.

The Admin Assistant, along with the headteacher, monitors pupil attendance, ensuring that if there are absences relating to mental health, that all necessary conversations are had and measures put in place to address the issue.

Impact – monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Full Governing Body. Mental health and wellbeing is an integral part of our ongoing strategic planning, and, as with all other areas of the School Improvement Plan, the actions and their impact are regularly reviewed by the school.

Staff wellbeing is a standing item in teacher development meetings and in every headteacher's report to governors. Pupil wellbeing forms part of pupil progress meetings and the performance management of classroom based staff.

Annual staff survey results are reported to governors and trends responded to.