

Leechpool Primary School

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING POLICY

Background

There are government expectations that schools should support pupils and staff to be resilient and mentally healthy. Schools should provide a safe environment that fosters trust and belonging and create a culture that supports mental health.

It is estimated that 1 in 4 children and young people will be affected by a mental health difficulty each year with 1 in 10 children in the UK aged between 5 and 16 years have a diagnosable mental health condition. A whole school emotional wellbeing approach that moves beyond learning and teaching to cover all aspects of school life has been found to be effective in bringing about sustained health benefits.

Policy Statement

At Leechpool Primary School, we aim to support and teach skills to pupils to increase their awareness of emotional health and wellbeing.

Two key elements to support good mental health are:

- Feeling Good – experiencing positive emotions like happiness, contentment and enjoyment. It also includes feelings like curiosity, engagement and safety.
- Functioning well – how a person is able to function in the world. This includes positive relationships and social connections, as well as feeling in control of your life and having a sense of purpose.

Aims

We are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils as we recognise the importance of mental health and emotional well-being in the same way that physical health is. We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued.

We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play. Our role in school is to ensure that children are supported to manage times of stress or challenge and to reach their full potential.

At our school 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 secure in their identity and sense of self in a diverse world
- help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks
- enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in pupils
- provide the right support to pupils with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.

We promote a mentally healthy environment for pupils through:

- promoting our school values (the 6Rs) 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 regular opportunities to reflect
- access to appropriate support that meets their needs

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- a range of physical activities to promote health and well-being
- explicit mental health teaching as part of the PSHE curriculum

We pursue our aims through:

- Universal, whole school approaches such as using therapeutic thinking in managing behaviour
- Our whole school inclusive ethos
- Following a progressive PSHE curriculum, that celebrates diversity, using West Sussex Education 4 Safeguarding to complement our scheme
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties including attachment disorder.
- Following guidance and using resources from West Sussex Thought-full programme

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy, our Safeguarding policy and our SEND policy in cases where pupils mental health needs overlap with these. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for Behaviour and Anti-bullying, and PSHE and SMSC policies.

Lead Members of Staff

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

Mrs Nicola Davenport – strategic overview and Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mr Eliot Law - Designated Safeguarding Lead and Mental Health and Emotional Well-being Lead

Miss Hannah Kemp – PSHE Subject Lead for the whole school

Mrs Erin Short, Mrs Lisa Harrison, Mrs Gina Stapely, Mrs Marli Hollis - Learning Mentors across the school

Mr Daniel Clement - accessing appropriate support for staff and liaising with Occupational Health

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 the cohort we are teaching but we will also use the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

Targeted support

The school will offer support through targeted approaches using the Ordinarily Available Inclusive Practice booklet (OAIP) for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- Circle time approaches or 'circle of friends' activities.
- Targeted use of SEAL and E4S resources as appropriate.
- Using feelings resources e.g. 'worry boxes' and 'worry eaters/monsters'
- Managing emotions resources such as 'the incredible 5-point scale'
- Primary Group Work/Mental health and wellbeing groups
- ELSA and Learning mentor support – either individually or in groups
- Therapeutic activities including art, Lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques

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The school will make use of resources to assess and identify wellbeing in pupils as appropriate including:

- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire
- The Boxall Profile
- Emotional literacy scales
- Leuven scales
- Outside agency assessments

Signposting

We will ensure that pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support.

Identifying needs and Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of 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 with a Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Emotional Wellbeing lead as appropriate.

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
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Falling behind academically

Working with Parents

In order to support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website and through emails and the Inclusion newsletter
- Be available for parents to share concerns
- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g. through parent workshops
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who 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 – on the website
- 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
- Work with other agencies and partners

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- The school nurse
- Educational Psychology services
- West Sussex Learning and Behaviour Advisory Team
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)

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- Counselling services
- Family support workers through Enabling Families or the Early Help Team
- Therapists when appropriate

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular Safeguarding training in order to enable them to keep students safe. We have access to online training through TTE which staff can access individually if needed. West Sussex Wellbeing project provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more pupils.

Mental Health and Well-being of Staff

We are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our staff as well as pupils as we recognise the importance of mental health and emotional well-being in the same way that physical health is. We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued. We ask that staff look out for and support each other.

Our role in school is to ensure that children and staff are supported to manage times of stress or challenge and to reach their full potential.

It is important to raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SLT that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school. Reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate individual needs.

There is a staff working party that meets weekly to ensure staff well-being is addressed.

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for staff which may include:

- access to agencies that can support with healthy work/life balance or particular situations outside of school (on display in staffroom)
- wellbeing twilight and INSETS
- fitness and wellbeing sessions for staff only
- social activities
- access to Occupational Health

We will ensure that staff are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support. There are posters in the staffroom of how they can access confidentially if needed. There is also a page in the front of the staff handbook highlighting key information for staff.