Mental Health and Wellbeing policy

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Bentley new village primary school

headteacher: VICKY SIMMONS

2021-2022

 **MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY**

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| **PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICY:** Louise Wales | **LAST UPDATED BY** |
| **DATE:** April 2022 |
| **SIGNED: V. Simmons**  | **ROLE: HEADTEACHER** |
| **TO BE REVIEWED:** |  |

**OUR SCHOOL VISION**

Together, we will create a calm and welcoming learning environment and work together to secure success for all. We will strive to create a safe, caring, supportive and inclusive school.

Our school will equip its pupils with the skills that society and the local community demand and so we will value the skills and learning that children need in order to look after themselves, their families, their health, their mental well-being and their bodies. We will strive to teach the whole child and create life-long learners and pro-active citizens.

**ETHOS**

We believe that:

1. All children can learn. All staff and children are able to recognise the value of learning.
2. *All staff*, working at New Village, will have consistently high expectations of children’s learning potential, attitudes and behaviour and take corporate responsibility for ensuring these in, and around, school.
3. Learning takes place in *all areas* of our school and through the *entire*learning day - inside and outside of the classroom.
4. Children should be taught how to learn; learning how to be an outstanding learner.
5. Consistently challenging, dynamic, engaging and empowering teaching leads to outstanding learning, resulting in a school where *every* child’s potential is realised.
6. *All staff* will value *every child’s contribution* to the school and strive to create a learning environment that brings out the full potential in all.
7. Rigorous, continuous monitoring, thorough and informed evaluation and accurate analysis of *all the elements* of teaching, is essential in ensuring high-level teaching and learning.
8. Learning at New Village will produce and enhance a learning skills-set that will be lifelong; we will actively promote this for every child and for all staff.
9. New Village School will demonstrate its commitment to quality teaching and learning through its dedication to *continuous professional development* for all staff; recognising and exploiting all opportunities to enhance its workforce and the learning environment.
10. All children will be encouraged to develop as individuals.  Their creativity, talents, differences and uniqueness.

**OUR SCHOOL VALUES**

**Determination – Resilience – Tolerance – Cooperation – Creativity – Curiosity**

**CURRICULUM MANDATE**

Our New Village curriculum will offer equitable opportunities for all pupils to access a curriculum that is rich in knowledge, experiences, understanding and language that represent the best of humankind.  Whilst instilling in our learners a knowledge, understanding and appreciation of how to take responsibility for their physical and mental wellbeing.  Through the curriculum, children are exposed to diversity through celebrating, studying and appreciating differences and similarities.  We recognise the importance of language in school and throughout life and enrich the curriculum with opportunities to develop vocabulary, speak in different contexts, read quality texts and learn to be active listeners.  Our curriculum contributes effectively to building a self-regulating, self-motivated individual who consistently demonstrates the New Village key values when faced with challenge because we know ***what challenges us changes us***.

This policy was written in consultation with staff, pupils, parents and professionals involved in mental health and wellbeing.

**Policy Statement:**

At Bentley New Village Primary School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing 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 our school we:

• Support children to understand their sensations, emotions and feelings

• Help children to feel safe and comfortable so they feel able to share any worries or concerns to a trusted adult

• Provide opportunities that help children socially to form and maintain relationships

• Promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count and that everybody is unique

• Encourage children to be confident in their own skin

• Help children to develop emotional resilience and to 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 various life-events

• Specialised, targeted intervention to support children with emotional difficulties

**Scope:**

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Medical 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 policies. 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:

Vicky Simmons – Headteacher and designated DSL

Louise Wales – Inclusion Manager and deputy DSL

Rachel Emery – SENCO/Acting assistant Head

Steve Stallard – PSHE lead

Alex Peterson – Inclusion and Attendance Officer

Catherine Burton – Thrive Practitioner

**Teaching about Mental Health:**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum and as part of the whole-school programme - Jigsaw. We will also use the Thrive class screening tool to help identify any children who may have gaps in their emotional development. We currently use the strategies identified by our Thrive class screenings as part of our general classroom practice and management as well as having weekly timetabled Jigsaw PSHE lessons in each class. On top of this, we celebrate Children’s Mental Health week each year, encourage our children to participate in emotional check-ins and have a range of books in school that we use in order to support children in dealing with any mental health issues that may arise; i.e. Bottled by Joe and Tom Brassington.

**Targeted support:**

The school has 7 members of staff who are licensed Thrive practitioners, these adults are based in various areas within school. We also have a member of staff who is a trauma informed champion. Therefore, the ethos of our school is very much ‘trauma friendly’. We offer many children support through targeted approaches, this may include one to one support or group work. Where necessary children are screened and have specific, individual targets which are to support their emotional well-being. As well as our Thrive Base we also support children by offering;

• Circle time approaches or ‘circle of friends’ activities

• Managing feelings/emotions resources e.g. ‘worry boxes’ and ‘worry eaters’ and ‘calm boxes’

• Primary Group Work/Mental Health and Wellbeing groups

• Strengths and Difficulties questionnaires

• Right-time Thrive activities and strategies in each class

• Access to Forest School with our in-house member of staff

• We teach basic brain science and breathing techniques

• The children are offered space to disperse their anger

• Teacher meet-and-greet in the mornings with the children

• Emotional check-ins with an adult (1:1 for identified children and whole-class otherwise)

**Signposting:**

We will ensure 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:**

All staff are responsible for tracking the well-being of their pupils and should be able to identify a range of possible difficulties including:

• Attendance

• Punctuality

• Relationships

• Approach to learning

• Physical indicators

• Negative behaviour patterns

• Family circumstances

• Recent bereavement

• Health indicators

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which indicate a student 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 the class teachers as well as the DSL and/or Inclusion Manager. All staff understand the internal referral process we have for Thrive and they may refer for the any of the following;

• 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

**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

• Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get 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.

**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

• Paediatricians

• CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) including the ‘with me in mind’ service

• Parenting and Family support worker

**Training:**

As a minimum, all staff will receive annual 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. We offer supervision and regular team meetings to staff so they have the opportunity to de-brief as well as identify any areas for development. Thrive practitioners access an annual CPD course and all staff received regular Thrive updates as well as information on topics like attachment disorder. Our Inclusion Manager also accesses relevant training through Buy Doncaster to ensure our practice is in-line with the latest guidance. Further/specific 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. Staff also have the opportunity to access supervision from ‘with me in mind’ so they can chat to a mental health nurse instead of their line manager if this is something they feel would be more beneficial.

**Rationale**

Mental health problems at work are common. At least 1 in 6 employees is experiencing common mental health problems, including anxiety and depression. 1 in 3 people blame their place of work for their stress. Mental health can affect any of us regardless of age, personality or background. In many ways mental health is just like physical health, we all have it and we need to take care of it just the same. Mental health can include a wide range of experiences and can affect the way we think, feel and behave. They can occur as a result of experiences in both our work and personal lives, or develop without an easily identifiable cause.

According to the latest research of the Education Partnership, 75% of all education staff have faced physical or mental health issues in the last two years because of their work and 53% have considered leaving as a result.

• Almost one in five (19%) said they had experienced panic attacks

• Over half (56%) had suffered from insomnia and difficulties sleeping

• Over a third (41%) had experienced difficulty concentrating

**What does good mental health look like?**

• Able to manage the stresses in daily life

• Confident in yourself

• Able to express a range of emotions

• Involved in the community you live in

• Engaged with the world around you

• Capable of living and working productively

**How might I know if my colleague is experiencing poor mental health?**

• Changes in their behaviour or mood or how they interact with colleagues

• Changes in their work pattern e.g. coming in early or staying late

• Changes in the quality of their work or the tasks they are able to focus on

• Struggling to make decisions, get organised and find solutions to problems

• Appearing tired, anxious or withdrawn and losing interest in activities and tasks they previously enjoyed

• Changing in eating habits, appetite or increased drinking and smoking.

(Every situation is different and our colleagues may not show any of these signs, or they may show other signs not listed above. Even if you notice these symptoms please do not make assumptions about their mental health)

**Work Stress**

Good stress management is important in the workplace and building resilience can help you to adapt to challenging circumstances.

There are a whole host of factors which can cause stress at work, including:

• Emotional demands of the job

• Physical demands of the job

• Parents’ behaviour

• Excessive workload

• Workplace bullying

• School environment (air quality, lighting, state of classrooms, staff rooms)

• Lack of professional learning opportunities

• Low morale

• Excessive change

• Culture of blame

• Teachers striving for perfection

• Poor communication

**How to support wellbeing in our school;**

In education, there are many things out of our control such as targets and inspections dictated by education authorities. But there are also many things we can control, so it’s best to focus our efforts on areas such as:

• workload efficiency

• autonomy

• opportunities for professional learning

• addressing professional isolation

• rewarding achievement at work

• a good team ethos where we support our colleagues.

• regular team building days

**1. Nurture Resilience**

We aim to create an environment where staff feel able to seek help from one another. This can help create a mutual support network where staff can influence outcomes positively and work towards solutions as a team.

Another key factor in this step is training. Make sure we offer staff at every level continuing professional development (CPD) - it’s been proven in many studies to increase job satisfaction and contribute to wellbeing and resilience.

**2. Address Stress**

We aim to identify the sources of stress in our staff, there are many ways to address them:

• Work-life balance – aim to see that the day isn’t only dominated by work and ensure our staff have time off for eating and can fence off set times for their families (parent’s evenings, medical appointments). This way, the burden of the workload can be broken up and make it more achievable.

• Tackle the environment - make sure we have a good environment for our teams to work in. Simple things like essential repairs, tidying and de-cluttering are easy and affordable changes to make to do and can enhance the workplace to help reduce stress.

• Discourage perfectionism - nobody’s perfect, but the desire to be can be overwhelming. We encourage staff to be the best they can be, but don’t

put unrealistic demands on them - these can often spill over into their personal lives too and are a major contributor to stress and anxiety.

• Focus on happiness - rewarding and celebrating achievements, sharing success and encouraging our staff to spend time doing things they enjoys e.g. body beatz dance class, sewing and crochet club, book club.

**5 Ways to Wellbeing**

• Connect – feeling close to and valued by other people is a fundamental human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world. Social relationships are critical for promoting well-being and as acting as a buffer for mental ill health.

• Be Active – regular physical activity is associated with lower levels of anxiety and depression across all age groups. Exercise is essential for slowing down age related cognitive decline and for promoting well-being. E.G. taking a walk at lunch time, incorporating a walk in your journey to work, do some easy exercise like ‘stretching’ before work.

• Take Notice – being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances your well-being and ‘savouring the moment’ enhances your life’s priorities. It also enhances your self-understanding and allows you to make positive choices based on your own values and motivations. E.G get a new plant for your work space, try a new place for lunch.

• Learn – continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life. The practice of setting goals, which is related to adult learning in particular has been associated with higher level of well-being. E.G. sign up for a new course, create a book club at work.

• Give – participation in social and community life has attracted a lot of attention in the field of well-being research. Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy. E.G. invite a friend or family member for a catch up, offer to make a cup of tea for your colleagues.

**Looking After Yourself**

• Mindfulness – a technique you can learn which involves making a special effort to notice what’s happening in the present moment (in your mind, body and surroundings) without judging anything. This helps to cope with difficult thoughts, feel calmer and less stressed and become more self-aware.

• Do a Tech Check – don’t be afraid to disconnect for an hour or so if you usually spend a lot of time online – or have an evening where you do not check your emails or social media.

• Well-being afternoon – use it to treat yourself!

• Telling anyone about your mental health is a personal choice – there is no right or wrong answer. However if your mental health issue is considered a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act, you have a right to reasonable adjustments – but to get them to do that they need to know about your condition.

**Supporting Colleagues**

• Ask how you can help

• Listen

• Remember they’re still the same person

• Don’t judge

• Show trust and respect

• Be patient

• Offer reassurance

• Keep social contact

**Seeking Help**

We will continue to provide an open and non-judgemental atmosphere when it comes to the mental health issues of our staff and aim to provide support when and where required. We will always aim to make reasonable adjustments for anyone requiring support e.g. reduction in hours, change of days, availability to access medical/therapy appointments during the work day.

Every member of staff should be able to approach a member of the Senior Leadership Team or the Mental Health Lead without judgement when they are concerned about their own mental health.

**Resources**

www.headstogether.org.uk

www.youngminds.org.uk

www.mind.org.uk

www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk

www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk