Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

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Bentley new village primary school

Acting headteacher: v.simmons

2022-2024

 **MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY**

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| **DATE: October 2022** |
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##

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## 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

Our mission statement, **“What Challenges us, Changes us”**

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

# RATIONALE

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

# SUPPORORTING CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH

The first part of this policy addresses how we support children’s mental health in our setting.

**Scope:**

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Managing Emotional Development and Behaviours, Medical, SEND, Anti Bullying, PSHE and Safeguarding policies.

# LEAD MEMBERS OF STAFF:

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

Victoria Simmons – Head Teacher and Deputy DSL

Louise Wales – Inclusion Manager and Designated DSL

Abigail Smith – Assistant Head teacher, Mental Health and Inclusion Lead, Designated DSL

Rachel Emery – SENCO & Assistant Head teacher

Steve Stallard – PSHE lead

Vicky Ball & Stephanie Waddoups – Mental Health Officers

Alex Peterson – Inclusion and Attendance Officer

# MENTAL HEALTH PROVISION AT BENTLEY NEW VILLAGE:

Our Mental Health lead and officers will ensure that pupils’ mental wellbeing and the teaching of skills to promote a healthy mental state are prioritised within school. The Mental Health Lead will work at a strategic level to assess and prioritise the needs of the school which will be cascaded down through school via the work of the Mental Health officers.

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of the whole-school programme - Jigsaw. We use Thrive Right Time whole class screenings to teach children skills relevant to their emotional development age. This screening tool also supports the identification of children who are below their emotional development age and school will aim to support these children with targeted support which may include reparative Thrive.

Our Mental Health Leads will also work closely With Me in Mind to provide monthly assemblies and workshops themed around mental health and consultations, for both staff and pupils, for individual support for mental health. Our Mental Health leads will support the wider school and community by sharing relevant information on our School Dojo so that help is readily available and accessible. On a daily basis, children are asked 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 seven members of staff who are licensed Thrive practitioners. These adults have various responsibilities within school, including on the Senior Leadership Team and are based in different areas within school. This structure enables school to provide a consistent and inclusive approach to supporting pupil’s mental health which addresses school’s priorities. We also have a Trauma Informed staff member. Therefore, the ethos of our school is very much ‘trauma friendly’.

We offer many children specific, individual reparative work with a Thrive practitioner to support their emotional well-being and development.

In addition to our Thrive Base, children are supported through;

• Circle time approaches or ‘circle of friends’ activities

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

• Mental health assemblies and workshops

* With Me in Mind Consultations for bespoke mental health support

• Strengths and Difficulties questionnaires

• Right-time Thrive activities and strategies in each class

* Jigsaw

• 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. Our Mental Health officers will consult regularly with staff to discuss any mental health concerns arising in class and to identify any child who may benefit from specific support from With me in Mind.

# IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND WARNING SIGNS:

All staff are responsible for tracking the well-being of their pupils and should be able to identify any warning signs which indicate that a pupil is struggling with their mental health or emotional wellbeing. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these should communicate their concerns with the class teachers as well as a DSL and a Mental Health Officer. The DSL, Inclusion Manager and Mental Health officer will then decide on the best way to support the child which may include a referral to Thrive, a consultation with With Me in Mind or if the child’s needs relate to a wider family support need, a referral to Early Help.

Signs that a child could be struggling with their mental health could include;

• Attendance

• Punctuality

• Relationships

• Approach to learning

• Physical indicators

•Concerning behaviour patterns

• Family circumstances

• Recent bereavement

• Health indicators

• 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 TO SUPPORT THEIR CHILD’S MENTAL HEALTH

We will:

• Provide information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing via our School Dojo

• Share information and services available to parents to support their child’s and their own mental health via the school Dojo

• Ensure that parents are aware of the school’s mental health officers and how to contact them if they have concerns about their child.

• Make our Mental Health and Wellbeing policy easily accessible to parents

• 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.

# WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES

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

• With Me in Mind and CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)

• Educational psychology services

• Paediatricians

• School Nurse

• Parenting and Family support worker

* Early Help

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 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 have the opportunity to access supervision from our Mental Health officers or with mental health nurse from ‘with me in mind’ if they feel this would be more beneficial.

# SUPPORTING STAFF MENTAL HEALTH

**Rationale**

Mental health problems at work are common. At least 1 in 6 employees experience 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

# SUPPORTING STAFF 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 enjoy e.g. 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