

## Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

*This policy is inclusive of all pupils in the school including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage*

**Reviewed: May 2021**

**Reviewed by: Angela Gipson**

### INTRODUCTION

At Moulsford Preparatory School (the School), we aim to provide a positive learning experience for every individual. We take pride in the fact that we have a safe, enjoyable, respectful learning environment, which promotes self-belief, confidence and resilience - because everyone in our school community matters.

We take emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff very seriously. Our ethos is a kind one, which develops respect, self-esteem and gives a voice to all. The School is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for everyone and we recognise the importance of wellbeing. We promote a caring and inclusive ethos, which values parent/carers involvement and contributions greatly.

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 emotional wellbeing and mental health is everyone's business and we all have a role to play in promoting and protecting this.

The Department for Education recognises that 'Schools have a central role to play in enabling their pupils to be resilient and to support good mental health and wellbeing'. At Moulsford, we strive to create an ethos and environment that will develop children into individuals who behave well and tolerate, care and support each other, but who are also independent and can think for themselves. We want all members of the School community to be highly motivated and have a good self-image.

This policy outlines the ways in which the School cares for and nurtures the emotional wellbeing of our pupils, staff and stakeholders.

### OUR AIM

We aim to be a school which:

- Creates an enthusiastic and engaged learning community who will achieve their full potential
- Develops the whole child
- Aspires to be at the heart of our community

We aim to be a school where:

- Teaching and Learning is personalised, creative, challenging and fun
- A sense of mutual respect, care and responsibility is shown for everyone in school
- Everyone in school feels safe, supported, valued and happy
- All staff are supported through existing policies, procedures, initiatives and through individual pastoral care and advice.

We aim to work with all parents and carers to:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who they can talk to, and how to get the support they need if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our 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.

## **RATIONALE**

The emotional health and wellbeing of everyone in the care of the School is fundamental to our vision and our daily running. We believe it promotes school improvement and success in a multitude of ways:

- Pupils are more engaged with their learning
- Improved standards in all subjects
- More effective teaching
- Parents and carers more involved in school life and learning
- Pupils with high self-esteem and confidence
- Improved behaviour and attendance
- Fewer disengaged pupils
- Lower rates of persistent absence
- Positive and effective relationships between staff and with pupils
- Positive impact on recruitment

We believe that positive emotional health and wellbeing creates happier, motivated staff and pupils who strive to get the most out of life.

## **LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES**

As set out in the school's Ethos and Aims and Pastoral Care, Accessibility Plan (17b), Safeguarding (7a), Bullying (10a) and Behavioural policies (9a), the care for each child is central to the School's aims and provision.

Furthermore, the school understands the contribution that education can make in encouraging positive and questioning attitudes towards Equal Opportunities in the context of the wider community and recognises that:

- Developing an understanding of the views and rights of groups to which we do not ourselves belong is an important part of learning to live in society.
- Children learning to understand and respect differences of gender, race, religion, age, ability and disability and social disadvantage enhance the school's curriculum.

## **STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY:**

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as: physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They should also

understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the School environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to children with mental health needs and their families.

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote and protect the emotional wellbeing and mental health of our school community, staff with a specific responsibility include:

Mr B Beardmore-Gray	Headmaster, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)
Mr J Hamilton-Smith	Deputy Head (Pastoral) /Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Mr J Noble	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)
Mrs A Gipson	Specialist Safeguarding Trained/Mental Health First Aid Instructor
Mrs C McKenzie	Head of Safeguarding for EYFS
Mrs A Bush	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)
Anna Cutts	Nominated Child Protection Governor
Mrs K Hannaford	PSHE Subject Lead

## **RISK FACTORS**

Risk factors can impact on the wellbeing of a person and/or family such as: bullying, discrimination and peer pressure. We will retain strong links within our community to ensure any issues are addressed. At Moulsoford Preparatory School, we take great pride in our relationships with our children and the wider community.

We will ensure our communication systems remain effective in ensuring we are consistently up to date. We will use a secure school system to record any changes in the circumstances of a child or family and we will react appropriately. This might involve internal support from school staff or an external referral to a support service. We will ensure relevant staff are informed of the change to circumstance.

Risk factors can also affect our staff. We will recognise that at certain points in the year, things can be more challenging. We will aim to provide support at these times and ensure that staff have a voice to share their concerns or request help.

The school's head of wellbeing and Senior Management Team are central to addressing all risk factors. We will ensure that these people have the capacity to provide a link to all groups and provide appropriate support.

## **EARLY WARNING SIGNS**

At Moulsoford Preparatory School, we know that certain characteristics put some of us at more risk of developing mental health difficulties than others. These risks can relate to factors within ourselves, our families, our community or life events. Protective factors then decrease the likelihood of these risk factors leading to mental health difficulties because they help to balance out the risk and build resilience.

An understanding of these factors is built into our staff leadership and training programmes, with staff receiving dedicated training on both risk and protective factors. Staff are also aware of the warning signs that might indicate that someone is experiencing emotional wellbeing or mental health difficulties. These may include:

- Becoming socially withdrawn – isolating themselves from friends and family
- Changes in activity or mood
- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Falling academic achievement
- Talking/joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Secretive behaviour
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Reluctance to participate in PE lessons or to get changed
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear to be non-accidental
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

We have clear systems and processes in place to ensure early identification and intervention. We aim to identify mental health difficulties in our pupils as early as possible in order to prevent the difficulty from worsening. We do this in the following ways:

1. Concerns or comments are logged using our online monitoring system – Wellbeing Manager on ISAMS. These concerns may arise through:
  - a. Observations noting changes in behaviour, presentation or attention
  - b. Conversations with parents/carers
  - c. Conversations with pupils

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead are alerted to all entries that are added to Wellbeing Manager. These are quickly reviewed, and any follow up action taken, or that needs to be taken, is logged.
2. Information is gathered from a previous school at the point of transfer
3. Through discussion with parents/carers
4. Through discussion with other professionals – including external agencies

If there is a concern that the child is in immediate danger, then our safeguarding procedures would be followed.

When a concern has been raised, we will:

- Discuss this with parents/carers – parents/carers will always be involved unless any safeguarding issues are identified
- Signpost parents/carers to other sources of support
- Be available for meetings or for conversations to take place over the phone
- Record all meetings, conversations and referrals on Wellbeing Manager
- Support parents with making any necessary referrals or make referrals as a school
- Liaise with other agencies
- Ensure that parents/carers are kept fully informed of any decisions made regarding referrals or intervention

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

“Learning through health and wellbeing promotes confidence, independent thinking and positive attitudes and dispositions. Because of this, it is the responsibility of every teacher to contribute to learning and development in this area.”

(Curriculum for Excellence Health and Wellbeing Principles and Practice, 2009)

Learning in Health and Wellbeing ensures that children develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes which they need for mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing now and in the future. Learning through Health and Wellbeing enables children to:

- Make informed decisions in order to improve their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing
- Experience challenge and enjoyment
- Experience positive aspects of healthy living and activity for themselves
- Apply their mental, emotional, social and physical skills to pursue a healthy lifestyle
- Make a successful move to the next stage of education or work
- Establish a pattern of Health and Wellbeing, which will be sustained into adult life.

Staff use a variety of methods for ensuring sound emotional health and wellbeing for children. These complement and reflect the overall aims and philosophy of the school. Our approach includes:

- School Values
- Clearly identified rewards and sanctions, understood by all.
- Rewarding positive behaviour and achievement through our merits and commendation system
- Setting appropriately challenging tasks.
- PSHE lessons
- Encouraging co-operation and collaboration.
- Developing social competence.
- Encouraging and developing coping strategies and resilience.
- School Prefects
- School Buddy system

Moulsford Preparatory School has an embedded PSHE scheme of work for both the Pre-Prep and Prep. Boys from Reception to Year 2 follow the Jigsaw PSHE programme and boys from Year 3 to Year 8 follow the Thoughtbox scheme. Jigsaw PSHE is a comprehensive and completely original Scheme of Work for the whole Pre-Prep. Year 3 to Year 8 follow the Thoughtbox scheme. Both Jigsaw and Thoughtbox bring together PSHE Education, emotional literacy, social skills and spiritual development in a comprehensive scheme of learning. All of these pieces of learning are brought together to form a cohesive picture, helping children to know and value who they are and understand how they relate to other people in the world.

Both Jigsaw and Thoughtbox contribute, as a good PSHE programme should, to the British Values agenda very significantly, both through the direct teaching of information and through the experiential learning children will enjoy.

We link our whole school assemblies to the PSHE curriculum. We are proud of the way we promote emotional wellbeing for all our pupils through PSHE which underpins the whole of our curriculum.

The delivery of personal, social and health education and citizenship is fundamental to our promotion of emotional health. Through the planned programmes and informal curriculum, opportunities exist to explore issues appropriate to children's ages and stages of development.

## **CONNECTING WITH PARENTS**

We see parental involvement as a vital part of emotional wellbeing. Regular opportunities exist to promote partnership with parents, including:

- Welcome meeting in September – a chance to meet the staff, find out about the organisation and routines and curriculum in each class.
- Parents' meeting each term.
- Parental questionnaires to help us build on what we do best and identify areas for improvement.
- Termly Parent Celebrations so children can showcase their wonderful learning in the form of plays, singing, quizzes, art and readings.
- Involvement in pupil profiles and reviews for children with special educational needs.

- Inviting parents to join in with some of our assemblies.
- Inviting parents to Christmas Nativities, Carol Service, Easter Service and Year 8 leaving service.
- Regular updates on social media.
- Weekly news bulletins in forms of the week ahead and weekly roundup.
- Access to Teen tips – a live and interactive, online portal, the Wellbeing Hub gives parents the knowledge and skills to understand and meet the social and emotional needs of children and adolescents. The Hub also gives pupils support, answers, careers advice and a wealth of resources to promote positive mental health.

## **STAFF WELLBEING**

At Moultsford, we recognise that our staff are our most important resource and, as such, they are valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally within a caring, purposeful learning community.

We recognise that there is a direct correlation between the wellbeing of our staff and the wellbeing of our pupils, and that the culture and ethos of a school are determined by the extent to which staff work towards a shared vision. We believe that it is essential that all staff feel part of a valued team, have the opportunity to express their views and are supported to manage their workload within a culture that supports a healthy work-life balance.

In light of this, we will provide staff with:

- Regular staff surveys.
- Access to Head of Wellbeing Monday to Friday to support staff.
- Additional non-contact time for subject leaders.
- Additional non-contact time for staff with other additional responsibilities e.g. SEN and Key Stage Leaders.
- Curricular planning time within the school week.
- Access to appropriate external training and CPD, as relevant to their role.
- A staff room environment that is relaxing and a comfortable space to work.
- An open-door policy meaning that the Senior Management Team are available when staff are in need of speaking to someone about an issue of concern.
- A fully committed and supportive governing body.
- Performance management process will allow for mutual communication about personal wellbeing and mental health, if this is deemed necessary.

## **Staff Training and CPD**

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to emotional and mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe. Our head of wellbeing is a mental health first aid instructor and has trained many of our staff upto Mental Health first aid supervision level.

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.

## **SIGNPOSTING**

There are a huge range of emotional wellbeing and mental health issues which might have an impact on our school community and it is beyond the scope this policy to provide detailed guidance on each one of them. In light of this, we will take opportunities to signpost pupils, staff and our families to appropriate support through a variety of means:

- Weekly newsletters
- Posters displayed around school and in outdoor noticeboards
- A dedicated section on our school website
- As part of the teaching and learning process through assemblies, workshops and dedicated lessons
- Twitter

By highlighting sources of support relevant to the whole school community we are ensuring that everyone understands:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at How to access it
- Why it can be accessed
- What is likely to happen next