



# **Emotional Health and Wellbeing Policy May 2023**

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child  
Article 3: The best interests of the child must be a top priority  
in all decisions and actions that affect children.

### **This policy aims to:**

- describe the Howard Primary School's approach to emotional wellbeing and mental health issues
- increase understanding and awareness of mental health issues so as to facilitate early intervention for mental health problems
- alert staff to warning signs and risk factors
- provide support and guidance to all staff, including non-teaching staff and governors, dealing with pupils who suffer from emotional distress or mental health issues
- provide support and information to pupils (and /or their parents/carers/peers) who suffer from mental health issues.

### **Consultation and review**

This policy was agreed in consultation with the following groups:

- School staff
- School council
- Parents and carers
- Governors/trustees

### **Roles and responsibilities**

- The designated mental health lead for our school is: Sonia Pollington
- The designated governor/trustee with responsibility for mental health is: Tammy Butcher
- The designated safeguarding leads are: Jackie DeSaulles, Jo Handley, Sonia Pollington, Jayshree Pillay and Sarah Winser.

These colleagues will work together to ensure that this policy is implemented and understood throughout our school. The designated mental health lead will have overall responsibility for this.

### **Definitions**

We adopt the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing, which is:

*“ a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community”.*

For clarity, we will use the term 'mental health' in this document, but it should be taken to mean both diagnosable mental health conditions and the more general state of mental and emotional wellbeing.

### **This policy sets out:**

- How we promote positive mental health.
- How we work to prevent mental health problems from developing or escalating.
- How we identify and support children with mental health needs.

### **Relationship to other school policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Positive Behaviour policy
- Managing medical needs in school
- SEND policy

## **Aims of this policy**

- To develop a culture that promotes positive mental health for the whole school community
- To remove stigma and promote a climate in which the school community is able to talk openly about mental health
- To recognise the mental health needs of parents and staff as well as pupils
- To increase understanding of common mental health issues
- To ensure that staff are able to recognise risk factors and symptoms of mental health problems and to provide appropriate initial support
- To ensure that any member of the school community can be signposted to appropriate support agencies where necessary

## **Key responsibilities**

We expect that all members of our community will play a part in promoting positive mental health. However, there will be key roles for specific colleagues:

- RHE co-ordinator
- SENDCO
- Designated Mental Health Lead

## **Children with diagnosed conditions**

It is likely that in our school, around one in eight children will have a diagnosable mental health condition. If a child does receive such a diagnosis, or is receiving help from a specialist service such as CAMHS, we will ensure that a plan is drawn up for his or her support in school. The creation of this plan will involve parents/carers, the pupil and the relevant agencies. Suggested content for such a plan would include details of the diagnosis or condition, the strategies to be put in place in school, details of any medication that has been prescribed, and information on how to manage any problems or emergencies.

## **Mental Health in the curriculum**

In line with the new Relationships and Sex Education curriculum we will ensure that children receive age-appropriate teaching on mental and emotional health. Topics will help children to develop an understanding of emotions, how to express their feelings and the effect feelings can have on their behaviour, how to cope with change, how to resolve conflict, how to develop resilience, and to know how to seek help, as well as understanding the links between physical and mental health.

## **Referrals to other agencies**

Staff, pupils and parents/carers will be made aware of the support services that are available and given information on how these services can be contacted. This will be through our usual systems such as messages in newsletters, information on school noticeboards and the website, displays in school or workshops.

If staff believe that a pupil, parent/carer or colleague need more specialist help, a referral will be made to an appropriate service in line with our usual school procedures.

## **Support in school**

We value and are committed to an open-door policy to counteract the stigma attached to mental health. Children, parents and staff are actively encouraged to liaise with our SENDCO if they have any concerns or if they simply want some more information on wellbeing matters. We will

endeavour to provide strong early interventions in school, to help prevent problems from escalating. In our school, these include:

- Whole school Zones of Regulation Program to actively teach the value of wellbeing, emotional language and clear, practical ways for self-care and emotional regulation
- 1:1 support or small group support using Zones of Regulation Program according to children's needs
- Wellbeing segment in KS1 and KS2 Monday's assemblies using Zones of Regulation Program
- Wellbeing weekly class assembly in EYFS using Zones of Regulation EYFS Program
- Dedicated Wellbeing Blog on school's website
- Use of mindfulness techniques in class such as breathing to calm/focus/energise according to children's needs
- Teaching of DOTS mindfulness programme in Reception, yr1 and yr2 by trained practitioner (MISP: Mindfulness Project in Schools)
- Staff actively promote the language of Zones of Regulation both in class and around school
- Zones of Regulation Staff and Parents Workshop
- Parents Gym: 6 weeks program for groups of up to 12 parents at the time

In addition, we will ensure that all pupils are helped to build supportive relationships with staff and peers, particularly those who may struggle with social interaction or find it hard to seek help when they need it.

### **External support**

Where we feel it is necessary, we will refer individual cases to specialist support services. These include *[please list the services to which your school makes referrals]*

CAHMS

EWMHS

Educational Psychologist

School Nurse

Early Help

Young Carers

Speech and Language Service

After consultation with the above-mentioned agencies, further referrals can be made e.g. Eating Disorders Clinic, Sleep Clinic, Stammer Clinic, Drop In Youth Services etc

### **Early warning signs**

It is important that all staff and parents/carers are aware of the early signs of mental distress:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- A change in, or a lack of, emotional self-regulation e.g. over reacting over a very small matter, automatically assuming the worst of themselves and other people, emotional apathy, feeling the need of being in enclosed spaces

- Developing a fixation on objects and/or people and over reacting if those are not available or change
- Mental, verbal and physical hyperactivity and inability to switch off
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood that last for longer than a few days
- Falling academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide; researching these topics online
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Wearing inappropriate clothing, such as long sleeves in warm weather or starting to wear very baggy clothing
- Secretive, withdrawn behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness, truancy or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

### **Additional vulnerability**

We acknowledge that anyone can experience mental illness at any time. However, there are key risk factors that can make someone more likely to develop problems. We will ensure that all staff are aware of these, which include:

- Living with a parent or family member who has a mental illness
- Bereavement or change in family circumstances such as divorce or moving home
- Stress, including exam pressure
- Puberty (many mental illnesses develop before the age of 14)
- Peer pressure
- Misuse of drugs or alcohol
- Physical illness or disability
- Learning disability

By ensuring that staff are aware of these risk factors we can improve the likelihood that children will get support early and that problems do not escalate.

There are many ways in which staff can become aware that a child is experiencing this kind of additional vulnerability. These can include:

- Observations from staff
- Children's disclosures or questions
- Early help assessments
- Meetings with parents/carers
- Working with other agencies such as social care or children's centres
- Monitoring absence patterns
- Monitoring behaviour patterns using CPOMS

### **How we will help**

When concern is raised about a pupil, we will:

- Ensure the pupil has access to pastoral care and support in school

- Where necessary, work with the pupil and his/her parents or carers to create a personal support plan
- Make referrals to specialist services where appropriate
- Provide all pupils with information about where they can get support, both in school and from external agencies

### **Managing confidentiality**

If a pupil discloses concerns about their own mental health, or the mental health of a friend or relative, we will ensure that they are listened to calmly, and will be offered non-judgemental support.

All disclosures should be recorded in the same way as any other safeguarding disclosure. Staff should remember that they cannot promise to keep the information secret, but that they may need to share it with other professionals in order to get the best help for the pupil. In this case, the member of staff will tell the pupil that they have to share the information, and with whom. If possible, the pupil's consent should be obtained. However, if consent is refused this should not prevent information being shared if this will prevent the pupil from being at risk.

Sharing disclosures with appropriate staff also safeguards staff's emotional wellbeing as it means a single individual does not take full responsibility for that young person, and can also seek help and advice whilst continuing to offer support to the pupil.

Pupils should know that parents and carers will be informed, although if pupils are old enough they may wish to do this themselves. In these cases, staff should give pupils a 24-hour window before contacting the parents/carers themselves.

In some cases, involving parents or carers may increase the risk to the young person. In these situations, school safeguarding policies should be followed.

### **Working with parents and carers**

For parents or carers, it can be distressing to hear that their child is suffering from mental health problems. We will work with families to ensure the best possible outcome for the child by:

- Ensuring parents/carers are given information about support services in the area
- Arranging meetings at appropriate times and in venues where families feel comfortable
- Setting clear agendas so everyone knows what meetings are for and what outcomes are being planned

Additionally, we offer a range of support to parents and carers such as parenting workshops, giving information on how to help their child with problems, and helping with referrals to other agencies such as social care.

As a school, we also actively celebrate and take part in National Mental Health Awareness Week in May. We believe that this initiative can help in breaking down barriers around mental health and increase awareness in our school community.

### **Support for peers**

Pupils may find it difficult to know how to help a peer who is suffering from mental health problems. Staff will be mindful of this and will offer support on a case by case basis, ensuring that friends can

protect their own wellbeing as well as helping them to look after each other. We will ensure that pupils know:

- How they can best support their friend
- Things to avoid doing or saying
- Warning signs that their friend might need more help
- Where they can get more support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways to deal with their own feelings and worries

### **Training for staff**

All staff will receive regular training on how to recognise and respond to mental health problems.

Our nominated mental health lead is Sonia Pollington (SENDCO)

### **For support on specific mental health needs:**

Anxiety: <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/>

OCD: <https://www.ocduk.org/>

Depression: <https://depressionuk.org/>

Eating Disorders: <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>

Self-Harm: <https://www.selfharm.co.uk/>                      <http://www.nshn.co.uk/>

Suicidal thoughts: <https://papyrus-uk.org/>

### **Further sources of advice are available:**

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/>

<https://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/schools-in-mind/>

<https://www.minded.org.uk/>

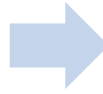
<https://www.healthylondon.org/resource/schools-mental-health-toolkit/>

### **Appendix**

<https://www.howard.croydon.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/bsk-pdf-manager/2019/10/Zones-of-regulation-letter-01-10-19.pdf>

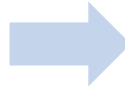
## School Pathway

We use the ALGEE Action Plan



- 1. Assess for risk
- 2. Listen non judgementally
- 3. Give reassurance and information
- 4. Encourage to seek appropriate professional help
- 5. Encourage self help and other support strategies

Concern raised as per school procedures



- Teacher and /or school staff observation
- CPOMS entry
- Alert from parents and /or external agencies
- Child's disclosure
- Peers' disclosure
- All parties meet to put together an action plan

Onward referrals as necessary



- Referrals to external agencies are made following procedures set up by external agency.
- Meetings can be held in school or, if not convenient, they can be held online.
- Ongoing support will be timetabled in consultation with child, child's teacher and parents.
- Any referrals to in-house or outside school support will require parents' view and approval.
- All agencies will feed back on progress to both school and parents.
- Recommendations will be actioned in school and at home depending on child's needs.



