WALMLEY
INFANT SCHOOL

Policy for Positive Mental Health and Well-Being for Children

Reviewed by Full Governing Body on 28th November 2019,15 December 2020, 12 July 2022, 11th July 2023, 20th June 2024, July 2025

Signed: Victoria Davis

Chair of Governing Body

Next review due July 2026

Introduction

At Walmley Infant School and Nursery class, we place positive mental health and well-being at the centre of school life. Our vision is:

> 'The strength and capacity of our minds to grow and develop, to be able to overcome difficulties and challenges and to make the most of our abilities and opportunities'.

This vision highlights the importance we place on supporting every child's emotional wellbeing so that they are happy and ready to learn. We aim to nurture positive mental health and well-being for every pupil, parent/carer and staff member.

We promote a supportive ethos in school, based on the understanding that all children need the foundations of positive mental health to be able to fulfil their potential in every area, academically, personally and socially. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at supporting individual children.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and well-being, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and well-being policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for children affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health. We believe in a proactive approach to give children, teachers and families strategies to deal with situations as they arise.

This policy sets out our commitment to monitoring and improving the well-being of all children in school. It sets out some of the ways that key members of staff take responsibility for the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and well-being. It also describes our process for identifying and responding to mental ill health and the support we make available to all children.

Children's Mental Health

There are many ways that we can support children emotionally and help them cope with any problems they face. Emotional support will be available for any child in school who needs it through their own teacher, Inclusion Lead, Assistant Headteachers or Headteacher.

We can access NHS services, such as the STICK services, Family Connectors or Early Help.

https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/childrens-mental-health/

Top Tips suggested by NHS England include:

- Be there to listen
- Stay involved in their life
- Take what they say seriously
- Support them through difficulties
- Encourage their interests
- Build positive routines

Compass

Compass are a Mental Health and Support team that work across the city in various schools with children aged 5 and over. They work within our school to provide mental health and wellbeing support for children and families. Their aim is to ensure children and young people access early help that is right for them, in the right setting, delivered by the right professional. They help children and young people to manage their thoughts, feelings, behaviours, and physical sensations so that they can better engage with their learning and education. They work alongside education staff to develop whole school approaches towards positive mental health and wellbeing. A referral is required for this service and can be done in school or self-referred by a parent/guardian.

See separate policy for Staff Positive Mental Health and Well-Being.

Equality and Diversity

We regard every member of our school (learners, job applicants or staff) as of equal worth and importance, irrespective of his/her creed, culture, class, race, gender (including gender reassignment), disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, marital/civil partnership status or age. We acknowledge, respect and celebrate other people's beliefs and sensitivities and through our curriculum, we aim to foster an awareness of the needs of others.

We endeavour to ensure that pupils and staff recognise that discrimination on any basis is not acceptable, and we provide an environment in which all pupils and staff feel safe, included and able to express and question views.

We will always positively challenge any discriminatory practice as active members of the school community, giving regard to the individual's ability to learn and to change.

Rights Respecting School

In 2017 Walmley Infant School became a UN Rights Respecting School. Rights associated with mental health and well-being include:
Article 12 – the right to be heard
Article 13 – the right to an opinion
Article 19 – the right to be protected from violence, abuse and neglect
Article 27 – the right to have physical, social and mental needs met
Article 28 – the right to education
Article 31 – the right to relax and play
Article 34 – the right to be protected from sexual abuse and exploitation
Article 36 – the right to be safe
Article 39 – the right of victims to receive help to recover their health, dignity and self-respect.

Aims of our Emotional Well-Being Work in School

Through our work with children in school we aim to:

- Promote positive mental health and well-being in our school community, ensuring that families are aware of the support we provide
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health and well-being issues in a secure environment of openness and trust and embed the skills that children need to make effective decisions about their own mental health and well-being.
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health in children and families

- Provide support to children experiencing emotional distress and/or mental ill health and their parents/carers.
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues.

This policy is intended as guidance for all staff and governors.

It should be read in conjunction with our **Medical Needs Policy** in cases where a child's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the **SEND** policy and School Information Report for SEND, where a child has an identified special educational need.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with our **Safeguarding** policy, where a mental health need is related to a Safeguarding need.

What does Positive Mental Health and Well-being mean?

Mental health is defined by the World health Organisation (WHO) as:

> 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 contribute to her or his community.'

Mental Health is how we feel, how we think and how we behave. It is about:

- Being able to form and maintain relationships with others
- Being able to have fun
- Being adaptable to change and other people's expectations
- Being open to new learning
- Being able to develop a sense of right and wrong
- Being able to develop the resilience to manage ordinary setbacks

All children and young people need to:

- Be able to connect with others by participating in groups and teams
- Know they are capable and able to achieve
- Know that they count in their world and can contribute to their community
- Know they have courage and can manage risks appropriately
- Know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable

Walmley Infant School recognises that at times individuals may need additional support to maintain or develop positive mental health and well-being. The mental health and well-being of children, staff, parents/carers and the wider whole

school community will impact on all areas of development, learning, achievement and experiences.

We believe that all children have the right to be educated in an environment that supports and promotes positive mental health for everybody. We are committed to raising awareness, increasing understanding and ensuring that we can and do make a difference by providing an environment where all people feel safe, secure and able to achieve and experience success and wellbeing.

A distinctive feature of our school is the positive, caring and supportive atmosphere we have created. A consistent approach from the whole staff team means that our school environment and ethos promote the mental health of all members of the school community.

Concerns about Mental Health and Well-being: Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students by:

- treating all pupils with empathy, respect and kindness
- encouraging children to disclose concerns or seek help when necessary
- report any well-being or mental health concerns to the Designated Leader for mental health and well-being.

Staff with a specific responsibility include:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Helen Murphy (Headteacher)
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and Senior Mental Health Lead – Leah Whittall (Assistant Headteacher)
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Amy Baines (Assistant Headteacher)
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Jenny Steele (EYFS Lead)

The Designated Safeguarding and Senior Mental Health Lead, or the deputies in her absence; is responsible for:

- Co-ordinating the school's response to mental health and well-being
- Providing relevant and current training to provide the knowledge and skills staff need to identify signs of mental ill-health in children at school
- Reporting to the Governing Body on the school's well-being policy and programmes of support
- Working with senior leaders, governing body, staff, parents and children to create an environment in which everyone feels safe, supported and motivated.

- Reviewing this policy and ensuring that it is developed in consultation with parents and staff
- Listening to the views of children and making sure that their voices are heard in the decision-making processes of the school
- Keeping detailed records of any significant mental health concerns
- Building links with relevant external partners and liaising with them when there are any significant mental health concerns
- Acting as a source of support and expertise in the school.

The child's class teacher, a teaching assistant supporting a child's learning, a lunchtime supervisor, Earlybirds playworker or school secretary may be the first person to recognise a change in a child's demeanour. Any member of school staff could become aware of changes in behaviour which may indicate that a child is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues.

These changes may include:

- Changes in activity and mood
- Disengagement from learning activities
- Erratic or unaccountable behaviour
- Unexpected or disproportionate reactions to ordinary situations
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Secretive behaviour
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking about self-harm or suicide
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretively
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Identification and Support

Once staff have identified a concern their priority should be to talk to the child concerned, to gain a better understanding of the situation and the child's response. Any member of staff who has concerns about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Designated Safeguarding and Mental Health Lead or the Designated Safeguarding Leads or the Inclusion Lead. The

appropriate person will talk with the child and parents/carers where needed to put appropriate support in place.

An informal plan should be agreed such as additional one to one time in school with a trusted adult or a targeted intervention programme that provides strategies that the child can use when they are feeling worried or creating social stories to support the child.

Where appropriate, the Mental Health Lead may also suggest making an appointment with the child's GP. or if the parent/carer wishes to escalate the process then a formal referral can be made to CAMHS for external support and advice. https://www.forwardthinkingbirmingham.org.uk/make-a-referral Parents must be made aware at this point that this service is heavily over-subscribed and that there will be a waiting period. Parents may also wish to visit their GP and raise their concerns about their child with them. While this will not speed up the referral process this simple action may support them in feeling they are doing something to help their child. Any referrals will be led and managed by Helen Murphy, Designated Safeguarding Lead or Helen Grace, SENDCo.

Any agreed plan that supports mental health has the same value and validity as one that supports learning and will fully be implemented by named staff and reviewed in the agreed timescales.

If there is a concern that the child is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal child protection procedures must be followed with an immediate referral to the DSL or Deputy DSL. If the child presents a medical emergency, then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Families

Research carried out by the NSPCC found that:

> Living in a household where parents or carers have mental health problems does not mean a child will experience abuse or negative consequences. Most parents can give their children safe and loving care.
>
> Many children whose parents or carers have mental health problems go on to achieve their full potential in life, particularly if their parents receive the right support at the right time (Hogg, 2013).
>
> However, there is a risk that parental mental health problems can have a negative impact on children.

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/parental-mental-health/ (Accessed June 2024).

At our school we value the relationships we have with our families and our open-door approach means many parents feel comfortable approaching staff when they are going through a difficult patch. We strive to support where we can and know this may be as informal as providing a non-judgemental listening ear, to signposting to local services, to making a formal referral to an external agency. We also informally promote parents befriending and supporting each other.

Staff can signpost parents or parents can refer themselves to Birmingham Healthy Minds if they require support. https://www.bsmhft.nhs.uk/our-services/birmingham-healthy-minds/self-referral/ (Accessed June 2024)

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our children to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE SCARF curriculum and embedded throughout our school learning community. All classes have a mood or feelings chart that they use to express their own emotions throughout each day. Staff use these boards to begin conversations with children about how they are feeling and provide support as necessary.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of each group of children but there will always be an emphasis on enabling children to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

There are also assemblies throughout the year on talking about Mental Health. The children know that they can talk about how they are feeling, and opportunities are always given to reflect and share experiences. The children are aware of their safe adults and that they can speak to them if they need to.

My Happy Mind

From September 2024, a well-being programme called My Happy Mind will be introduced to children. Through the teaching of this programme, there is a goal to make sure that every child has the tools to thrive in the world. It is a science- backed programme that is grounded in the latest science and research about what it takes to create positive well-being. The Happy Mind programme is underpinned by 5 key philosophies:

Proactive not reactive: mental health activity is often focused on supporting individuals when they are facing challenges. This programme supports children to build their resilience and self-esteem proactively.

Stigma reversing: ensuring that children understand the science behind how their brains work and how they can impact their self-esteem and resilience.

A systematic approach: staff and parent wellbeing are supported through My Happy Mind resources and a parent app. This gives a well-rounded approach to support children's mental health and well-being.

Fun to learn: this programme engages the children through music, games, interactive quizzes and lovely characters.

Equitable access for all: My Happy Mind is tailored to meet the special educational needs of all children, including those who may be hard of hearing or partially sighted.

Managing disclosures

At times, a pupil may choose to tell a staff member concerns that they have about their own emotions or well-being. Disclosures may be particularly forthcoming at informal times e.g. residential visits. All staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure and a DSL will be available to respond to a concern. However, all staff are aware that if a need arises, that it is his/her responsibility to make a safeguarding referral if they believe a child to be at risk of harm. All staff should respond in a calm, supportive and non-judgemental way. Staff should listen rather than advise and their first thoughts should be of the emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded on My Concern, which notifies the Designated Safeguarding and Mental Health Lead, who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

Staff must be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. They should never promise the child that they will keep this to themselves and should inform him/her who they are going to talk to, what they are going to tell them and why it is important that they pass these concerns on.

Informing Parents/carers

Parents/carers will usually be informed if a child makes a disclosure and staff need to be sensitive when sharing this with parents/carers. It can be upsetting for parents to learn of their child's concerns and staff should give the parent/carer time to reflect. Parents/carers will not be informed if the DSL believes that by doing so a child would be put at significant risk of harm or that evidence required in an investigation could be destroyed (see Safeguarding Policy).

When working with parents/carers, staff should finish each meeting with agreed next steps and agree the date and time of a follow-up meeting or phone call. A brief record of the meeting should be kept on the child's confidential record. Staff should always highlight further sources of information where possible to offer support to the parent. However, if a child gives reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, a Safeguarding referral will be made following the Safeguarding procedure for Birmingham.
http://www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk/index.php/safeguarding-concerns (Accessed June 2023)

Working with all parents/carers and the school community

To support parents/ carers and the school community, the school will:

- Highlight sources of information and support on our dedicated Well-Being area on the school website (to be included September 2024)
- Provide information for parents through Tapestry
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to if they have any concerns about their child's mental health or well-being
- Make the school's mental health policy easily accessible to parents (this is available on the school website)
- Keep parents informed about the topics their children are learning about in PSHE

Training

All staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health and well-being issues as part of their regular child protection training to enable them to keep all the children in school safe.

The school will also make information available on the school's website and the Mental Health Policy will be readily available to all staff.

The Designated Senior Lead for Safeguarding and Mental Health will maintain an 'open door' policy for all staff who wish to discuss any concerns or questions they may have.

My Happy Mind provides CPD for staff and resources to support teaching.

Related Policies

This policy should be considered in conjunction with policies for:

- Safeguarding
- Equality and Diversity
- Relationships for learning (Behaviour)
- Anti-Bullying
- PSHE
- ICT, Computing and E-Safety

Useful Links

Every Mind Matters- This site was launched in October 2019. It aims to make talking about mental health issues or concerns as normal as talking about the weather. It features a short quiz designed to test your wellbeing, and advice

about what to do if you need some help. https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/

NHS Moodzone-The NHS has a website that gives some sensible self-help advice for anyone who lives with anxiety, stress or depression. There are case studies to read, activities to try and the reassurance that you're not the only one feeling like this. https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/

Forward Thinking Birmingham-https://www.forwardthinkingbirmingham.org.uk/

Young Minds-https://youngminds.org.uk/

Think U Know-https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/

Birmingham Mind-https://birminghammind.org/

Route to Wellbeing- https://r2wbirmingham.info/browse/19/family-support.html

NSPCC- https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/

Winston's Wish- This is a charity which supports children who have been bereaved https://www.winstonswish.org/