

Gamesley Primary School and Nursery



Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Policy Statement

At Gamesley Primary School and Nursery we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing for all pupils, families, members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows all voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures we aim to provide a safe and supportive environment for all affected.

At Gamesley we define ...

Good Mental Health as... having the ability to:

- develop psychologically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually
- initiate, develop and sustain mutually satisfying personal relationships
- use and enjoy solitude
- are aware of others and empathise with them
- experience happiness and can play and learn
- develop a sense of right and wrong
- resolve (face) problems and setbacks and learn from them.
- develop a sense of self and identity

Resilience as ... the ability to bounce back from the disappointments and difficulties we all experience. It is the ability to build protective factors in our lives which promote and protect our emotional wellbeing when faced with every knockbacks and unexpected changes.

Through our Strategy we aim to

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing for our community.
- Remove the stigma of mental health issues.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in pupils and each other.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support; both for themselves and pupils; who may have mental health issues.
- Provide the appropriate support to pupils with mental health issues.
- Develop resilience amongst pupils and raise awareness of resilience building techniques, creating a safe and nurturing environment for all.
- Raise awareness amongst our community of mental health issues and encourage staff to disclose any mental health issues in a supportive environment.
- Encourage a mental health friendly environment where everyone is aware of the signs and symptoms of mental ill health and can effectively sign post pupils and families.

Key staff members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils and each other. However, key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Pastoral Manager – Tammy Goodwin
- Designated Safeguarding Lead – Caroline Sutherland
- Designated Deputy Safeguarding leads – Lyn Malik and Emma Brown (plus Deborah Meredith)
- SENDCO - Emma Brown
- Staff Mental Health Champion – Tammy Goodwin
- PSHE Coordinator – Caroline Sutherland

Section 1 – Health and Welfare of Pupils

Mental health problems in children

Some children experience a range of emotional and behavioural problems that are outside the normal range for their age or gender. These children could be described as experiencing mental health problems or disorders.

Mental health professionals have defined these as:

- emotional disorders, e.g. phobias, anxiety states and depression;
- conduct disorders, e.g. stealing, defiance, fire-setting, aggression and anti-social behaviour;
- hyperkinetic disorders e.g. disturbance of activity and attention;
- developmental disorders e.g. delay in acquiring certain skills such as speech, social ability or bladder control, primarily affecting children with autism and those with pervasive developmental disorders;
- attachment disorders, e.g. children who are markedly distressed or socially impaired as a result of an extremely abnormal pattern of attachment to parents or major care givers;
- other mental health problems including eating disorders, habit disorders, post-traumatic stress syndromes; sleep disorders; and psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia and manic depressive disorder.

Many of these problems will be experienced as mild and transitory challenges for the child and their family, whereas others will have serious and longer lasting effects. When a problem is particularly severe or persistent over time, or when a number of these difficulties are experienced at the same time, children are often described as having mental health disorders.

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil or parent, in the first instance, they should speak to the Pastoral Manager or log their concern on 2MyConcern". If there is a concern that the pupil is a high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed.

If the pupil presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

Individual Care Plans

When a pupil has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, it is recommended that an Individual Care Plan should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the parents, and relevant professionals.

Teaching and learning

For all pupils with mental health needs reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure full access to the curriculum. These may include:

- Breaks from class when required;
- Provision of stress relief toys;
- Work broken into small chunks;
- Individual behaviour plans Curriculum

We have developed our own, bespoke curriculum for Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education based on the Jigsaw PSHE scheme that includes the statutory Relationships and Mental Wellbeing.

In addition, we will ensure that

- Opportunities to experience challenges in the outdoor environment are taken, with Forest School lessons delivered to all year groups
- Pupils are encouraged to act as role models within the school environment
- A commitment to follow a healthy lifestyle is developed through participation in varied, relevant, realistic and enjoyable activities.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.

Within the school (noticeboards, electronic display boards etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, website), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure staff, parents and pupils understand:

- What help is available
- Why should they access it
- Who it is aimed at
- What is likely to happen next
- How to access it

Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil 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 alert the Pastoral Manager.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of include:

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| • Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental | • Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope |
| • Changes in eating / sleeping habits | • Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather |
| • Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn | • Secretive behaviour |
| • Changes in activity and mood | • Skipping PE or getting changed secretly |
| • Lowering of academic achievement | • Lateness to, or absence from, school |
| • Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide | • Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause |
| • Abusing drugs or alcohol | • An increase in lateness or absences |

Targeted support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We work closely with the school nurse in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of our pupils. For example, the school nurse runs a drop-in session for parents.

We work closely with other professionals such as:

- Educational Psychologist
- Young Carers
- Child Psychologist
- Pupil and Wellbeing Officer
- Emotional Health Service
- Early Help service
- Inclusion Support Service
- Me Too
- Compass

In addition, we offer the following provision in house:

- Drawing and Talking Therapy
- Resilience Group
- Individual Mentoring
- Forest Schools Nurture Group
- Use of restorative approach
- Circle of Friends
- Zones of Regulation
- School based Play Therapy
- Lego Therapy

When thresholds are met referrals may be made to:

- Family Support Team
- Children's Services
- CAMHS
- School Nurse
- Young Carers

In some cases, a multi professional meeting will be arranged to discuss the case further.

Some children will neither meet thresholds nor be able to access individual therapies. As a school we attempt to offer one to one pastoral support for these pupils. This may be delivered by an individual behaviour plan.

Managing disclosures

Any disclosure must be recorded on an expression of concern form and passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. All safeguarding concerns will be treated in confidence and we will follow the safeguarding policy. For more information about Safeguarding, including our policy, visit the Safeguarding page on our website.

Section 2 - Health and Welfare of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are valued and welcomed into school. We communicate regularly, consult and engage with parents/carers through newsletters, assemblies, parent meetings etc.

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing. We work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Working closely with our local partners including the Children's Centre, Health Care professionals and partner schools
- Meeting all EYFS parents in person to discuss their family circumstances
- Encouraging parents into school for events such as Parent Days, Stay and Play sessions, Family Learning
- Ensuring Senior Leadership Team (SLT) attendance at all PTFA events
- Offering 1:1 SENDCO Parent meetings
- Offering parents the opportunity to meet with the Ed Psychologist, School Nurse or Speech and Language Therapist
- Ensuring all parents are aware of how to promote social and emotional wellbeing and prevent mental health problems
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.)
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting and academic skills, for example through lesson drip ins
- Ensuring parents, carers and other family members living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing. This will include support to participate in any parenting sessions, by offering a range of times for the sessions or providing help with transport and childcare. We recognise this might involve liaison with family support agencies
- Providing drop in sessions with the school nurse
- Providing an open-door policy with access to the Pastoral Manager
- Working hard to develop a close relationship with parents and carers which allow us to offer support

Section 3 - Health and Welfare of Staff

We recognise that a healthy happy workforce is required to deliver the best education for all our pupils. Our expectation is that staff have a responsibility to support their own mental health by accessing appropriate support, looking after their own mental health and to develop resilience and coping strategies. As a school we are committed to encouraging staff to develop a good work life balance and lead healthy working lives. Our aim is to:

- support the wellbeing of all staff to avoid negative impacts on their mental and physical health
- provide a supportive work environment for all staff
- acknowledge the needs of staff and how these change over time
- allow staff to balance their working lives with their personal needs and responsibilities
- help staff with any specific wellbeing issues they experience
- ensure that staff understand their role in working towards the above aims
- consider the needs of individuals
- create an environment where wellbeing is part of daily practice

We offer the following to support our staff's positive mental health

- A dedicated staff room for relaxation and healthy eating.
- A dedicated staff study room.
- Access to the SAS employee support service which includes counselling as needed.
- Access to the Trust wellbeing Officer
- Trust social events throughout the year for staff to participate in.
- SLT have an open door policy for all staff.
- SLT proactively support staff who are experiencing mental health difficulties.
- Take staff mental wellbeing into consideration when deploying staff to various roles around school.
- Reasonable adjustments for staff with recognised mental health issues.
- Sign post staff to appropriate support mechanisms such as local clergy, charities, GP, and Relate.
- Staff meetings are held weekly where individuals can air their views and feel supported.
- A supportive and generous non-sickness absence policy including wellbeing days each year.
- Celebrate staff special occasions.
- Recognise individual staff strengths through initiatives such as CEO "shout outs", mentions in newsletters and on Facebook, Staff raffles etc
- Staff mental health champion – this is a member of the SLT with an open door policy who is a point of contact for all staff.
- Encourage and support staff to put into perspective the everyday challenges of working with pupils.
- Help staff to set professional boundaries for themselves such as not sharing their telephone numbers; not texting parents with personal phones and not having their phones out during curriculum time.
- Remind staff not to share personal details such as phone numbers and not to interact with parents on social media. Staff with children in school should be aware and take measures to protect themselves. For example set high privacy settings on Facebook.
- Flexible working applications are always seriously considered within the confines of what is best for the pupils.
- Pastoral support
- No expectation to be at work outside of contracted/directed hours.

Role of all staff

All staff are expected to:

- treat each other with empathy and respect
- keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of other members of staff
- support other members of staff if they become stressed, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- speak honestly about their wellbeing and let other members of staff know when they need support
- contribute positively towards morale and team spirit
- use shared areas respectfully, such as the staff room

Role of line managers

Line managers are expected to:

- monitor workloads, be alert to signs of stress and regularly talk to staff about their work-life balance
- maintain positive relationships with their staff and value them for their skills and contributions, not their working pattern
- familiarise themselves with trust and school policies related to wellbeing
- discuss wellbeing as part of line management and faculty meetings
- make sure new staff are given a thorough induction programme and feel able to ask for help
- provide a non-judgemental and confidential support system to their staff
- understand that personal issues and pressures at work may have a temporary effect on work performance
- make sure any personal issues are considered during any appraisal or capability procedures
- promote information about, and access to, external support services
- help arrange personal and professional development training where appropriate
- keep in touch with staff if they are absent for long periods and conduct return to work interviews to support staff back into work
- conduct exit interviews with resigning staff to help identify whether any wellbeing issues lead to their resignation
- take any complaints or concerns seriously and deal with them appropriately using the academy's policies

Role of senior staff

Senior staff are expected to:

- lead in setting standards for conduct, including how they treat other members of staff and being respectful of agreed working hours
- manage a non-judgemental and confidential support system for staff
- monitor the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations
- make sure accountability systems are based on trust and professional dialogue, with proportionate amounts of direct monitoring
- regularly review the demands on staff, such as the time spent on paperwork
- make sure job descriptions are kept up-to-date, with clearly identified responsibilities
- consult staff before any changes are made to job descriptions
- listen to the views of staff and involve them in decision-making processes, including consideration of any workload implications of new initiatives
- communicate new initiatives effectively to all members of staff to ensure they feel included and aware of any changes occurring at the academy
- make sure that the efforts and successes of staff are recognised and celebrated

- produce calendars of meetings, deadlines and events so that staff can plan ahead and manage their workload
- provide resources to promote staff wellbeing, such as training opportunities
- promote information about and access to external support services
- organise extra support during times of stress, such as Ofsted inspections
- welcome suggestions and give feedback

Role of the head of school

Creating a positive and supportive atmosphere throughout the school, the head of school will:

- operate an open-door policy for all staff
- ensure that all policies that affect staff wellbeing are adhered to and reviewed
- monitor staff attendance data
- appraise the governing board of issues to do with staff wellbeing
- consult with representatives from unions regarding staff wellbeing

Role of the local governing board

The local governing board is expected to:

- make sure the academy is fulfilling its duty of care as an employer, such as by giving staff a reasonable workload and creating a supportive work environment
- monitor and support the wellbeing of the principal
- make decisions and review policies with staff wellbeing in mind, particularly in regard to workload
- be reasonable about the format and quantity of information asked for from staff as part of monitoring work
- ensure that resources and support services are in place to promote staff wellbeing
- ensure that staff are clear about the purpose of any monitoring visits and what information will be required from them

Managing specific wellbeing issues

The academy will support and discuss options with any member of staff who raises wellbeing issues. This can include situations where they are experiencing significant stress at the academy or in their personal lives.

Where possible, support will be given by line managers or senior staff. At all times, the confidentiality and dignity of staff will be maintained.

Support could be given through:

- reassessing their workload and deciding what tasks to prioritise
- temporarily relieving them of some duties
- giving staff time off to deal with a personal crisis
- arranging external support, such as counselling or occupational health services
- the flexible working hours policy, which aims to cater for the needs of all staff
- the principal supporting requests from staff for reduced or part-time working, where personal circumstances mean that it would improve their work-life balance
- completing a risk assessment and following through with any actions identified
- phased return or altered hours after absence

Training

Annual training takes place for all staff as part of the safeguarding training and mental health training for all teachers has been delivered. Other specific training will be utilised as appropriate.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our appraisal process and additional CPD will be offered throughout the year where it becomes appropriate.

All staff have access to the National College training package

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host additional training sessions for staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the Head of School, Caroline Sutherland, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Managing Sickness and Absence Policy
- Non-Sickness Absence Policy
- Code of Conduct

If a member of staff has concerns about themselves or a colleague they should speak to the Staff Mental Health Champion.