

Shipbourne School



Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

September 2023

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

Policy Statement

At Shipbourne 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 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:

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings better.
- help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries.
- help children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count.
- encourage children to be confident and 'dare to be different'
- help children to develop emotional resilience, to manage setbacks and have tools to change the emotions for the better.

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 recent difficulties including bereavement.
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties including attachment disorder.

Scope

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs policy and our SEND policy in cases where pupils mental health needs overlap with these. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for Positive Relationships and Anti-bullying, and the RSE and PSHE curriculum. It should also sit alongside child protection procedures.

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Mrs Terri Daters - Designated safeguarding lead(DSL)
- Mrs Alison Holmes – Wellbeing and Mental Health lead and Deputy DSL
- Mrs Julie Harvey - Deputy DSL
- Mrs Sharon Vanns – SENCO and DSL

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE and RSE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the needs of the cohort we are teaching but we will also use the PSHE Curriculum Overview and Coram Scarf Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

Targeted Support

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- Circle time approaches or ‘circle of friends’ activities
- Targeted use of Coram Scarf resources
- Managing feelings resources e.g. ‘worry boxes’ and ‘worry eaters’

- Managing emotions resources such as 'Zones of Regulation'
- Therapeutic activities including art, Lego, yoga and mindfulness techniques
- Art and Lego therapy
- Referral to outside agencies

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.

Identifying Needs and Warning Signs

Staff are encouraged to assess children and refer concerns at staff meetings or during termly supervision and pupil progress reviews. These are aimed at identifying a range of possible difficulties including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student 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 communicate their concerns as soon as possible with the DSL or the wellbeing lead as appropriate.

Possible warning signs include:

- 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

In order to support parents, we will:

- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g. through parent forums.

- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to if they have concerns about their child.
- Make our emotional wellbeing and 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.

Working with other Agencies and Partners

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

- The school nurse through the Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust - (Tel. 03001234496)
- Educational psychology services
- Behaviour support through Two Bridges pupil referral unit
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services
- Early Help
- Therapists

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular 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.

The Education People learning portal provides online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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.