



Stow Heath Primary School  
Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy  
2023 -2024

Review date July 2024

# Policy Statement

At Stow Heath Primary School, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. We know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional 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:

- ✓ Provide a nurturing, safe and supportive environment with clear expectations for behaviour
- ✓ Help children to understand and manage their emotions and feelings
- ✓ Help children to understand and manage their emotions and feelings
- ✓ Help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- ✓ Help children to form and maintain relationships
- ✓ Foster self-esteem and self-worth, and ensure children know that they count
- ✓ Encourage children to be confident and 'dare to be different'
- ✓ Help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks
- ✓ Provide a structured approach to education about relationships, sex and health
- ✓ Support parents as partners in their child's learning and development

## The Importance of Mental Health and Wellbeing

Recent research by the mental health foundation has shown that mental health problems affect about 1 in 10 children and young people. Statistics show that 70% of children who experience a mental health problem have not had support at an early age or the opportunity to build and develop their resilience. As a school, we recognise the need to ensure mental health problems are identified early and appropriate support is provided.

This policy describes the schools approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors. It should be read in conjunction with our policies for Stress at work and Staff Wellbeing; Supporting pupils with Medical Needs in cases where a child's or staff member's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical condition; the SEND policy where a pupil had an identified special educational need; our Safeguarding Policy; and Anti Bullying Policy.

We aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing of every member of our school community and recognise how important mental health and wellbeing is to our lives, as a physical health.

We recognise that children's mental health and overall wellbeing can affect their learning and achievement.

A key aspect of our role in school is to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a school where:

- ✓ All children are valued as unique individuals
- ✓ Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- ✓ Children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling stigma
- ✓ Positive mental health is promoted and valued

- ✓ Bullying is not tolerated
- ✓ Parents are supported and can access help

## Policy Aims

The Policy Aims to:

- ✓ Promote positive mental health and wellbeing of all staff and children
- ✓ Promote an open culture which increases understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- ✓ Provide support to staff in the workplace
- ✓ Provide support to staff working with children with mental health issues
- ✓ Provide support to children suffering from mental health and their peers and parents

## 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 Scoffham, Mrs Nicholls, Mrs Billingham-Hill – designated child protection leads
- ❖ Miss C Downen and Mrs Billingham-Hill mental health leads
- ❖ Mrs E Nicholls – CPD Lead
- ❖ Mrs A Bennett – PSHE lead

## Definition of Wellbeing

‘Mental health is a state of wellbeing 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. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel and act’ (World Health Organisation)

Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want children to:

- ✓ Be effective and successful learners
- ✓ Make and sustain friendships
- ✓ Deal with and resolve conflict effectively and fairly
- ✓ Solve problems with others for themselves
- ✓ Manage strong feelings such as frustration, anger and anxiety
- ✓ Be able to promote calm, optimistic states that support the achievement of goals
- ✓ Recover from setbacks and persist in the face of difficulties
- ✓ Work and play co-operatively
- ✓ Complete fairly and win and lose with dignity and respect for other competitors
- ✓ Recognise and stand up for their rights and the rights of others
- ✓ Understand and value the differences and commonalities between people, respecting the rights of others to have beliefs and values different from their own.

## Taking a Whole School Approach

We take a whole school approach to effective practice and provision is in place that promotes the emotional wellbeing and mental health of both staff and pupils. This is achieved by:

- ✓ Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience and which everyone understands

- ✓ Helping children to develop social relationships, supports each other and seek help when they need it
- ✓ Helping children be resilient learners
- ✓ Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health
- ✓ Early identification of children who have mental health needs and planning to support their needs, including working with specialist services
- ✓ Effectively working with parents and others
- ✓ Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and own resilience
- ✓ Developing an open culture that encourages discussion and understanding of mental health awareness

**We promote a mentally healthy environment through:**

- ✓ 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 self-worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- ✓ Providing opportunities to reflect
- ✓ Access to appropriate support that meets their needs
- ✓ Creating a whole school community that upholds kindness, values difference and challenges exclusion

**Our Curriculum**

Positive wellbeing is promoted through the curriculum and all school activities. Through a carefully planned approach to PSHE & Citizenship our pupils are helped to acquire the knowledge and develop the skills and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy, independent lives, and to become resilient, informed responsible citizens. Specific themes that promote positive emotion health and wellbeing include:

**Autumn term**

Being in my World  
Celebrating Difference

**Spring term**

Dreams and Goals  
Healthy me

**Summer term**

Relationships  
Changing Me

In addition, whole school approaches such as Wellbeing Wednesday Assemblies and circle time sessions are used to further develop the pupils' knowledge of strategies. For example, peaceful problem solving is taught in circle time sessions to help pupils learn to control and manage feelings when there are disputes on the playground. Whole school events are held including Mental Health Awareness Week in May, World Mental Health Day in October, and Anti-Bullying week in November. During these events, the focus is on mindfulness and resilience and the purpose is to teach pupils' strategies for dealing with anxiety and coping with changes. Children will have the opportunity to raise difficult issues and as a result these will be acted on and a debrief provided.

When pupils require additional support for social, emotional and/or mental health, we use the Getting it Right Program developed by Educational Psychologist Service in Wolverhampton to personalise individual needs.

Where there is a need for more specialised, targeted approaches that support vulnerable children, school will use our Family Liaison Officer or refer to outside organisations such as CAMHs for support.

### **Identifying Needs and Warning Signs**

As a school, we want to ensure that we have clear systems and processes in place for early intervention and identification of mental health problems, and that referral to experienced skilled professionals is made. Staff know pupils well and are on the constant look out for any signs that children are upset, appear anxious or worried, or are acting 'out of character'. Negative experiences and distressing life events can affect mental health in a way that brings about changes in a child's behaviour or emotional state. This can include:

- ✓ Emotional state (fearful, withdrawn, low self-esteem)
- ✓ Behaviour (aggressive or oppositional; habitual body rocking)
- ✓ Interpersonal behaviours (indiscriminate contact or affection seeking; overfriendliness or excessive clinginess; demonstrating excessively 'good' behaviour to prevent disapproval; failing to seek or accept appropriate comfort of affection from an appropriate person when significantly distressed; coercive controlling behaviour; or lack of ability to understand and recognise emotions).

### **Risk and Protective Factors**

Early intervention to identify issues and provide effective support is crucial. The school's role in supporting and promoting positive mental health and wellbeing can be summarised as:

- Prevention: Creating a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely, improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school population, and equipping children to be resilient so that they can manage the normal stress of life effectively. This will include teaching pupils about mental wellbeing through the curriculum and reinforcing this through our ethos and other school activities.
- Identification: Recognising emerging issues as early and accurately as possible.
- Early support: Helping children to access evidence based early support and interventions.
- Access to specialist support: Working effectively with external agencies to provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment.

### **Pastoral Organisation for Staff and Staff Wellbeing**

Pastoral support for all members of the school community is fundamental to our aims and philosophy. We believe that a well-supported, valued staff team with a clear and shared purpose are best placed to provide emotional wellbeing for the children in their care.

Members of our community meet to support the school's work around mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Members include our change team.

### **To ensure staff wellbeing, these principles are followed:**

- ✓ Leaders act as positive role models
- ✓ Senior leaders and our Change Team ensure that the school environment promotes staff wellbeing
- ✓ Decision making processes are understood and supported by staff
- ✓ Opportunities are provided for staff to socialise and relax with each other
- ✓ New staff are supported with an appropriate level of induction
- ✓ Leaders promote an open listening culture that responds quickly to problems
- ✓ The regular and systematic of monitoring staff absences
- ✓ Access to confidential external counselling and support services

### **Working in Partnership with Parents**

We understand and value the need to work closely with parents to ensure that the school's health initiatives meet the needs of our pupils. We value the important contribution made by parents and appreciate the need to proactively engage parents and families in the health of the children. We see to establish and maintain strong partnerships with families, outside agencies and the wider community to promote consistent support for the children's health and wellbeing.

### **To support parents, we;**

- ✓ Highlight resources of information and support about mental health and wellbeing on our school website
- ✓ Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their child
- ✓ Make our Mental Health and Wellbeing 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

### **Working with other agencies and parties**

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
- ✓ Educational Psychology services
- ✓ Wolverhampton Outreach support services
- ✓ Inclusion Support Services
- ✓ CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)

### **Training**

We are committed to high quality, ongoing professional development on emotional wellbeing and mental health.

All staff will receive regular training linked to a recognising and responding to mental health issues. Specific issues will be covered through specialist training where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with a child/ren.

## **Policy Development and Review**

This policy was written in consultation with staff, pupils, parents, governors and professionals involved in mental health and wellbeing. Key stakeholders involved at the time in the school' work in this area will review it.

Policy developed September 2022.