



# **Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Policy**

**Last reviewed September 2019**

*Wellbeing is all about our holistic health, including the physical and emotional. When we have good levels of wellbeing we feel that life is in balance and that we can generally cope well. We feel motivated and engaged, we're resilient and able to deal effectively with daily troubles, as well as 'bounce back' from life's challenges*

### **Good Mental Health helps children to:**

- Learn and explore the world
- Feel, express and manage a range of positive and negative emotions
- Form and maintain good relationships with others
- Cope with , and manage change and uncertainty
- Develop and thrive

Building strong mental health early in life can help children build their self-esteem, learn to settle themselves and engage positively with their education. This, in turn, can lead to improved academic attainment, enhanced future employment opportunities and positive life choices.

At Millfields Community School, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil community. We aim to help pupils to develop essential social and emotional skills. Bespoke teaching sessions, assemblies, curriculum opportunities and enrichment opportunities will cultivate these skills and understand and manage thoughts, feelings and behaviour. We will pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. We recognise that in an average UK classroom, three children may be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly, by mental ill health.

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors. This policy should be read in conjunction with our SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need or medical need.

### **This Policy Aims to:**

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents

### **Lead Members of Staff**

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

- Jane Betsworth – Head teacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Debi Cookhorn – Deputy head, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), Mental Health Lead
- Kingsley Fry - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) SENCO
- Chris Belgrave –Pastoral Support/Learning Mentor (LM)
- Claire-Louise Leyland – Director Treetops Therapy & Training (TT)
- Dr Julia Dabrowski – Clinical Psychologist

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the mental health lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSL/DDSL. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to EWMHS (Emotional and Wellbeing Mental Health Services) is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the mental health lead or SENCO.

### **Mental Health Log**

The school has a mental health referral form that can be accessed by staff and parents on the website. The school keeps a log of staff and pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This can include:

- Details of a staff's/pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

The log will be kept securely by the mental health lead.

### **Teaching about Mental Health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHCE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the curriculum and the specific needs of the cohort being taught but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others. Mental Health and wellbeing will also feature as part of assemblies and there will be a designated place where children can post a note if they need help but feel they cannot/don't want to approach an adult.

A number of parenting sessions will be available annually to ensure there is a supportive space to discuss common issues parents face.

### **Signposting**

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what sources of support within school and in the local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it. We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas.

## **Warning Signs**

School staff will be trained on recognising 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 communicate their concerns using the orange form.

### **Possible warning signs include:**

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed

All disclosures written on an orange form should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps - at each level of discussion

This information should be shared with the SENCO, who will inform the mental health lead, decide on the appropriate next steps and store the record. A briefing between key leaders will take place fortnightly to discuss active and new cases.

## **Confidentiality**

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we feel it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on then we would normally, if age-appropriate, discuss this with the pupil:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the SENCO, as this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents must always be informed, pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the pupil should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents may not be informed depending on the individual case, but the DSL must be informed immediately.

### **Working with Parents**

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect. We should always highlight further sources of information and give them further information to read (e.g. helplines, forums etc.) as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. We should always provide a clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

### **Working with All Parents**

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get help about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHCE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home
- Provide workshops for discussion around themes suggested by parents

### **Training**

As a minimum, 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 pupils safe.

We will host relevant information on our website for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue (please register as an individual) 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 developing situations with one or more pupils. Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host training sessions for all 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 mental health lead.

### **Staff Wellbeing**

As school staff juggle a multitude of different tasks and demands, it is important that everyone is given the right emotional and practical support so that they can, in turn, support their pupils.

In addition to having a positive impact on colleagues and children, staff wellbeing can improve performance and job satisfaction, which can lead to reduced staff turnover. It can also help to reduce absence (both short and long term), increase productivity and promote staff engagement.

We hope that Millfields caring ethos and environment will have a major impact on the wellbeing of its staff and pupils. The leaders define that culture and vision of the school and make it clear what behaviours, values and beliefs underpin it. The leaders of the school work hard to build a culture of trust where staff feels valued, can be open about their health and wellbeing and know how to access support if they need it.

Staff are signposted to the SAS medical and wellbeing support service where necessary and staff can self-refer (posters are displayed in the communal areas). Performance management meetings ensure there is a specified time for staff to discuss their responsibilities with members of the SLT and to share any issues they are having and their plans for the future which school endeavours to support.

Millfields ensures that a number of activities to support wellbeing are provided for staff during each academic year. Regular staff voice will be taken to ensure the provision matches the needs of the staff.

### **Policy Review & Action Planning**

The school will commit to writing an action plan each year to audit and improve the school's wellbeing responsibilities. We will talk to children and our stakeholders to collect meaningful information using a validated toolkit. This policy will be reviewed bi-annually. It is next due for review in September 2020.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis.

If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to our mental health lead.

Further useful reading:

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

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/728892/government-response-to-consultation-on-transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728892/government-response-to-consultation-on-transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health.pdf)

<https://www.annafreud.org/media/4612/mwb-toolki-final-draft-4.pdf> (toolkit)

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