Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Potters Gate CE Primary School and St Andrew's Infant School

Review Period:	Annual
Next Review Due:	September 2028
Governor Lead	Harry Gilchrist
Staff Lead	Alexis Carpenter

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

Policy Statement

At Potters Gate and St Andrew's, 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 at times, 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 individual.
- help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks.

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 Medical 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 Behaviour and Antibullying, and PSHE and SMSC policies. 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:

- Jayne Venables- Executive Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Alexis Carpenter – Assistant Head, Inclusion Manager, SENDCo and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, SLT Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead
- Annie Canton- Operational Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead, Pastoral Lead, ELSA
- Hollie Brightman – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, HSLW, Pastoral support

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 curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but we will also use the PSHE curriculum 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 SEAL resources. Managing feelings resources e.g. 'worry boxes' and 'worry monsters'
- Managing emotions resources such as 'the incredible 5-point scale'
- Primary Group Work/Mental health and wellbeing groups o ELSA support groups.
- Therapeutic activities including play, lego and relaxation and breathing techniques.
- Parent-Child triangulation work

The school will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate including:

- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire
- The Boxall Profile
- Emotional literacy scales

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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

All staff will consider mental health and wellbeing indicators for pupils as part of their termly progress meetings, 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 also 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 with a designated safeguarding lead or the emotional 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

Staff Identification

It is recognised at Potters Gate and St Andrews that promoting staff health and emotional well-being should be an integral part of the whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. Therefore, training and signposting to materials about mental health and emotional wellbeing are made available for all staff. An open-door policy to senior leadership is always made available if staff is in need of speaking to someone about any issues of concern or we have Mental Health First Aiders who can be spoken to. All staff have access to free and confidential wellbeing support services through The Good Shepherd Trust Staff Support Scheme (Vivup), understanding the important of their own emotional well-being and where to go if they need additional support / advice. Supervision and appraisal will allow for mutual communication about personal health and emotional wellbeing if both felt it is deemed necessary.

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Working with Parents

In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website
- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g. through parent forums, Mindworks, Pastoral team, Waverley Family Support
- Signpost to the Family Links Parent Puzzle Parenting course run at Space2Grow.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, 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 and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.
- Provide termly pastoral coffee mornings / meetings with the Assistant Head for Inclusion, Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead and our HSLW available to talk to.

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
- Educational psychology services
- Behaviour support through the Specialist Teaching Team
- Paediatricians
- Mindworks (previously known as CAMHS- child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- 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.

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. Hot topics will be delivered through staff and TA meetings throughout the year.