

BORINGDON PRIMARY SCHOOL
MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

At Boringdon Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. All children go through ups and downs during their school career and some face significant life events. In 2019, about 1 in 8 children (12.8%) aged 5 to 19 have a diagnosable mental health disorder and these can have an enormous impact on quality of life, relationships and academic achievement. In many cases it is life-limiting.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy." Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting children's wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

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 help 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.
- Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma.
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued.
- Bullying is not tolerated.

In addition to children's wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and wellbeing. We also acknowledge that through our pastoral care system we can support the mental health and wellbeing of our parent community as the primary carers of our children.

PURPOSE

This policy sets out our whole school approach to supporting positive mental health and wellbeing for children, staff and parents.

DEFINITION OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing:

“ a state of well-being 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 and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/young people to:

- Feel confident in themselves.
- Be able to express a range of emotions appropriately.
- Be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others.
- Cope with the stresses of everyday life.
- Manage times of stress and be able to deal with change.
- Learn and achieve.

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help children and adults to become more resilient, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise.

We aim to do this for children by:

- Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.
- Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.
- Helping children to be resilient learners.
- Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health. All children learn how to use 'Emotional Logic.' The themes surrounding mental health are explicitly taught through PSHE lessons using Jigsaw and in assemblies.
- Early identification of children who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services such as MAST, CAMHS and the Educational Psychology service.
- Effectively working with parents and carers.
- Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience when helping children with difficulties.

We aim to do this for staff by:

- Being mindful of their workload and trying to help them to maintain a work- life balance.
- Creating an ethos where staff feel supported and able to talk to colleagues openly about challenges and difficulties.
- Access to professional support through their status as an employee of WeST.

We aim to do this for the parent community by:

- Providing timely access to a parent support worker and/ or the SENCO to discuss emerging mental health concerns, emotional challenges and difficulties and to access specialist family support services.
- To offer signposting to places and people who can support parents with emotional challenges and difficulties or specific mental health needs.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues across the school community.

STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that children with mental health needs get the early intervention and the support they need.

All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as: physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They should also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

The SENCO ensures that:

- staff have annual INSET training regarding an aspect of Mental Health and Wellbeing, and facilitates specific staff attending courses related to promoting the mental health of children in their class with bereavement, attachment, anxiety or depression needs. (These are generally through MAST).
- Children with existing or emerging mental health needs are identified quickly through self- referrals to their teachers or pastoral team members, conversations with parents, termly progress meetings or observations of changes in mood, demeanour or behaviours. Children with an identified need are quickly supported through either school based support (ELSA'S, class

teachers or SENCO) or if outside agency support is required, referrals are made in an appropriate and timely manner.

- Whole school activities are planned that promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- The PSHE 'Jigsaw' scheme of work is used to explicitly teach children about various aspects of mental health and wellbeing.
- Staff can access support and advice in a timely manner to support children with needs in their class.
- That when necessary, mental health services are accessed and individual referrals made.

SUPPORT BEYOND SCHOOL

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the School environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to children with mental health needs and their families:

Family GP

School nursing service

<https://www.livewellsouthwest.co.uk/childrens-services/schools>

MAST

Plymouth's Multi Agency Support Team - a variety of professionals and therapists who can provide a range of support for children with mental health difficulties in the home and at school. They can also work with children at risk of mental health problems to try to prevent them emerging. This service can only be accessed through school.

CAMHS

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/mental-health-services/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-services-camhs/>

NHS

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/>

MIND

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

YOUNG MINDS

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

SAMARITANS

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

RETHINK MENTAL ILLNESS

<https://www.rethink.org/>

PLYMPTON HUB

<https://plymptonhub.org/>

EMOTIONAL LOGIC

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

The school actively promotes Emotional Logic as a method for all children to address emotional challenges proactively so that they feel empowered to take positive steps forward and overcome difficulties.

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Medical Needs, Anti-Bullying, SEND and Equality policies.

Links with the School's Behaviour Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need.

It is very important that staff recognise when a child is at risk of harm due to their mental health and this must be reported to the DSL without delay.

10/19 VC