

Fernhurst Junior School

Positive Mental Health Policy & Procedures

At our school, we are committed to the protection and promotion of positive mental health for all students and staff. We will continuously endeavour to improve the mental health of the school community by utilising a whole school approach to mental health, and via the identification and implementation of positive processes and practices which promote good mental health and wellbeing.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we recognise that one in six children and young people and one in six adults may meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental health problem, with emerging evidence of a recent rise in anxiety and depression in some groups (as of 2020). We aim to provide support for all members of the school community affected both directly and indirectly by mental health problems, signposting to the most appropriate services either locally or nationally when applicable.

Policy Aims and Objectives:

We aim to promote a safe and supportive environment and ethos which is conducive to the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school community. This policy is intended as guidance for teaching and non-teaching staff and governors. This policy should be read and understood in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

We will:

- Support students to understand their emotions
- Help children to manage change and adversity and develop resilience
- Provide an environment which is conducive to students sharing concerns about themselves or others

We will promote a mentally healthy school environment by:

- Adopting a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing and promote positive mental health in all staff and students.
- Raising awareness in the whole school community of the signs and symptoms of mental health problems
- Supporting staff to manage their own mental health and wellbeing and providing opportunities for staff and students to look after their mental wellbeing.
- Supporting staff to respond swiftly and effectively to any signs of an emerging mental health problem
- Engaging in activities which promote mental health and wellbeing and a sense of belonging in the whole school community
- Celebrating individual differences in students, ensuring all students feel valued and respected
- Valuing and celebrating non-academic achievements

- Reduce discrimination and stigma by increasing awareness and understanding of mental health problems
- Increase awareness of early warning signs of mental health problems
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to students experiencing mental health problems and their peers and parents or carers

Lead Members of Staff

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

Roberta Kirby - Head teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Cheryl Hudson - Assistant Head teacher, Inclusion Lead and Senior Mental Health Lead (MHL)

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the Mental Health Lead in the first instance.

In the event of any concerns that a student may be at risk of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed, with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Roberta Kirby.

If the student presents as a medical emergency, then the school's procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including the involvement of first aid staff and contacting the emergency services.

Teaching about Mental Health

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

The content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching, but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to identify when mental health problems may be emerging, and to seek appropriate support when needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms through our PSHE lessons and broader curriculum.

Support and Signposting

Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of student help-seeking. We will ensure that staff, students, and parents and carers are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community, including outlining:

- The help that is available
- Who the help is for
- The reasons for accessing the support
- When to access the support
- How to access the support
- What is likely to happen once the student has accessed the support

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which may 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 to Cheryl Hudson, our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead. We all differ in outward manifestations of distress, so it is important to consider any signs of change, for example, someone who is normally outgoing and communicative becoming less talkative and more withdrawn. It is important to emphasise that for some students experiencing distress, there may not be any apparent warning signs, or the student may actively be trying to hide their distress.

Potential warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Evidence of any changes to eating or 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
- Evidence of use of non-prescribed drugs or alcohol
- Expressing thoughts and feelings of failure, hopelessness or worthlessness
- Unsuitable clothing (for example, long sleeves in warm weather)
- Secretive or unusual behaviour
- Avoiding attendance at PE or getting changed secretly
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Expressing unusual ideas or beliefs

Managing disclosures

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should focus on listening in the first instance, rather than thinking about giving advice or offering solutions. Our first intent should be on the provision of a safe and secure space to discuss the student's concerns and promoting their emotional and physical safety.

All disclosures should be recorded using CPOMS. This written record should include:

- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed actions
- This information should be shared with the appropriate staff members who will offer support and advice about next steps. They will decide on the level of support required and whether a referral to an outside agency is appropriate or not.

Working with Parents and Carers

We recognise the importance of working with and supporting parents and carers as part of our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. In order to support parents and carers, we will:

- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to contact and how, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Ensure that parents and carers are involved in our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Ensure that parents and carers are aware of the support available within the school and externally
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular channels of communication such as the school newsletter and facebook.
- Keep parents and carers 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 opportunities for parents to be involved in any training or other activities which may help them support their child's mental health
- Ensure that this policy is available in accessible formats including multiple languages where required

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 to enable them to keep students safe.

The [MindEd learning portal](#) provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about specific issues.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge will be considered as part of our professional development process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed regularly alongside our Safeguarding and Behaviour Policies.

Next Review Date – **September 2023**