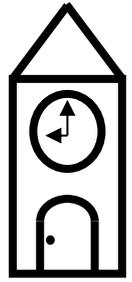


## Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing at Friday Bridge Primary School



### Policy Statement

*Mental health is 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.*

(World Health Organization)

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our school community including children, parents and all staff members. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for anyone affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health.

### Scope

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 the Safeguarding Policy, Individual Health Care Plans in cases where a child's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a child has an identified special educational need.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and children
- 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 children with mental health issues
- Provide support to children suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

# Leading a Mentally Healthy School

## Lead Members of Staff

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

- Sophie Foston/Ronnie Clarke/Jo Evans - Designated Child Protection
- Inclusion Coordinator - Jo Evans
- Cheryl Lenton/Sam Riley - Mental Health Champions

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child should speak to the Inclusion Coordinator in the first instance. If there is a fear that the child is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with a referral to the designated child protection lead. If the child presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed. Where a referral to the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service or CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the INCO.

## Individual Care Plans/Active Learning Mats

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan or active learning mat for children causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the child, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a child's condition/difficulties
- 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

## Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our children to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will, if necessary be adapted to the age and needs of the children but there will always be an emphasis on enabling children to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow the Cambridgeshire Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

## Signposting

We will ensure that staff, children and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

What support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined in our SEND policy. There is also a notice board in the entrance which will signpost parents to sources of support. We will regularly highlight sources of support to children within relevant parts of the curriculum as appropriate.

# Leading a Mentally Healthy School

## Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a member of the school community 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 the Headteacher.

## Managing disclosures

A child may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. If a child 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 listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the child's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the child's confidential file.

This written record should include:

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

This information should be shared with the Headteacher who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

## Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality at an age appropriate level. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a member of the school community on then we should discuss with them:

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

We should never share information about a child without first telling them. Ideally we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and/or a parent, for example, if a child is in danger of harm. It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the child, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the child and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with. We should always give children the option of school informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues then safeguarding procedures should be followed.

# Leading a Mentally Healthy School

## 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.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the child, 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. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can be helpful e.g., parent helplines and forums.

## Working with All Parents

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 go 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.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about at school.

## Supporting Peers

When a child is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the child who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
  - How friends can best support
  - Things friends should avoid doing/saying which may inadvertently cause upset
  - Warning signs that their friend needs help (e.g., signs of relapse)
- Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:
- Where and how to access support for themselves
  - Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
  - Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

## 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 children 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 children.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in April 2022.