Suckley School

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Responsible Person: Jo Rogers

Date Written: September 2021

Last reviewed: September 2023

Review Schedule: September 2025

Policy Statement

At Suckley School, we are committed to promoting positive mental health for every member of our children, staff, their families and Governors. We pursue this aim using universal, whole school approaches and specialised targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students and through the use of effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues. These approaches include Thrive and Trauma Informed Practise which feed into our Tier 2 support. We know that everyone experiences life challenges that 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. It is one of our roots in our curriculum and lies at the heart of all we do.

Policy aims:

- Promote positive mental health and well-being in our school community, including pupils, parents, staff and governors
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health and wellbeing issues through CPD in Thirve, Trauma Informed Practise and our PSHE policy and practise.
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide the right support to students with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SLT that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff and student welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

Concerns about Positive Mental health and Wellbeing

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

- Helen Field – Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Designated Senior Mental Health Lead
- Joanne Rogers – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/Trauma Informed Practitioner lead.
- Henry Walker – SENDCo/Thrive practitioner
- Ella Boyle – Thrive practitioner/PHSE Lead

School staff could become aware of changes in behaviour which may indicate a child is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues.

These changes may include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in 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
- 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 secretively
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child should speak to Helen Field (head teacher), Joanne Rogers (mental health lead) or Ella Boyle (lead thrive practitioner) in the first instance. If there is a concern that the student is in danger of immediate harm then the school's child protection procedures should be followed. If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting emergency services if necessary.

On occasion, a referral to CAMHS may be appropriate, this will be led and managed by Henry Walker (SENDCO).

When a pupil has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, an Individual Care Plan will be completed. The development of the plan will involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals.

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our children to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy safe are included as part of our PSHE and RSE curriculum and are embedded throughout our school learning community in line with the DfE RSE guidance that became statutory in September 2020.

By the end of Primary School pupils should know:

- that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health.
- that there is a normal range of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) and scale of emotions that all humans experience in relation to different experiences and situations.
- how to recognise and talk about their emotions, including having a varied vocabulary of words to use when talking about their own and others' feelings.
- how to judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate.

- the benefits of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation, voluntary and service-based activity on mental wellbeing and happiness.
- simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest, time spent with friends and family and the benefits of hobbies and interests.
- isolation and loneliness can affect children and that it is very important for children to discuss their feelings with an adult and seek support.
- that bullying (including cyberbullying) has a negative and often lasting impact on mental wellbeing.
- where and how to seek support (including recognising the triggers for seeking support), including whom in school they should speak to if they are worried about their own or someone else's mental wellbeing or ability to control their emotions (including issues arising online).
- it is common for people to experience mental ill health. For many people who do, the problems can be resolved if the right support is made available, especially if accessed early enough.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of each cohort but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others. Lessons will also be supported by assemblies throughout the year talking about Mental Health.

Managing Disclosures

At times, a pupil may choose to tell a staff member concerns that they have about their own emotions or well-being. All staff know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.
All staff respond in a calm, supportive and non-judgemental way.
Staff will listen rather than advise and their first thoughts will be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'
All disclosures will be recorded on a Record of Concern form and shared with Helen Field (headteacher/DSL) or Jo Rogers (Mental health lead/DDSL), who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

Staff are honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. They will not promise the child that they will keep this to themselves, and will inform the pupil who they are going to talk to, what they are going to tell them and why it is important that they pass these concerns on.

Informing Parents/Carers

Parents will usually be informed if a child makes a disclosure and staff need to be sensitive when sharing this with parents/carers. It can be upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and staff should give the parent/ carer time to reflect. A brief record of the meeting will be kept in line with school policy. Staff will highlight further sources of information where possible to offer support to the parent
However, if a child gives reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents may not be informed and Helen Field (Head teacher/DSL) and/or Jo Rogers (Deputy head/DDSL) will be informed immediately so that a referral can be made.

Working with parents/carers and the school community

We recognise the family plays an important role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring that all parents are aware of who to talk to if they have any concerns about their child's mental health and wellbeing
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.)
- Make the school policy easily accessible to parents and carers
- Keep parents informed about the topics that children are learning about in school.
- Carry out parent workshops/information sessions to raise awareness of mental health and well-being.

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 Mental Health Lead will receive professional Mental Health First Aid training or equivalent. We will publish relevant information to staff who wish to learn more about mental health and this policy will be provided to all staff as part of their induction. 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.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by the mental health lead every two years as a minimum. In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This policy will be approved by the governing body.