



## **Whiteley Well-Being**

### **A Policy for Supporting Mental Health and Well-being in our School Community**

At Whiteley Primary School, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all pupils, their families, members of staff and governors. The importance of well-being is central to our school vision 'A Place to Smile'; we aspire to achieve this vision for *all* in our community and we recognise the importance of positive mental health and well-being in delivering this vision:

**SUCCESS** – Believe you can succeed, and be the best you can be

**MUTUAL RESPECT** – Respect yourself, respect others, respect your surroundings

**INCLUSION** – Valuing difference and overcoming barriers

**LIFELONG LEARNING** – Inspired to learn at school, at home, for life

**ENRICHMENT** – Explore, experience, challenge, within the curriculum and beyond

### **Policy Aims**

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: “in order to help their pupils succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy”. Schools can be a place for children 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 pupils' well-being 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; be resilient; are supported to reach their potential; and able access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that pupils 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 be a school where

- all members of the school community are valued, have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- all members of our school community feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma.
- positive mental health and emotional well-being is promoted and valued.
- bullying is not tolerated.

In addition, we aim to

- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in students.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with children with mental health issues, and provide appropriate signposting for parents/carers.
- Ensure that staff are supported in relation to looking after their own mental health and wellbeing, instilling a culture of welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms; where there is effective signposting; and where well-being is underpinned by positive behaviour and welfare around school.



## **What do we mean by mental health and well-being?**

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 well-being is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want members of our school community 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.

## **Links to other policies**

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding; Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions; Behaviour and Anti-Bullying; SEND; Equalities; Accessibility; and Relationships, Sex and Health Education.

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.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

At Whiteley Primary School, we aim to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote and model positive mental health and well-being, 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 pupils with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

Key members of staff who have specific roles to play include:

- Lesley Pennington (Headteacher) – the designated safeguarding lead (DSL)
- Kate Bolton (Deputy Headteacher/Inclusion) – the school's designated lead for mental health and well-being, and deputy DSL
- The Personal Development Learning Team (PDL) – teachers who oversee the curriculum for PDL, ensuring a consistent approach across the school, as well as being advocates for staff well-being
- Members of the pastoral support team including two ELSAs (emotional literacy support assistants), Home School Link Worker, Nurture Teacher and specialist teaching assistants for small group /individual support.

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 health professionals and organisations that provide support to pupils with mental health needs and their families. These may include

- CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service)
- GP Service



- School Nursing
- Educational Psychologist
- Early Help Hub referral/Family Support Workers
- Local Counselling Services (e.g. Hampshire Youth Access, moving on project)
- Charities and Parenting support groups (e.g. Barnardos)

### **Mental Health and Well-being Curriculum**

The skills, knowledge and understanding our children need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PDL curriculum. We follow the SCARF programme (Safety, Caring, Achievement, Resilience, Friendship), provided by Coram Life Education. SCARF's whole-school approach supports primary schools in promoting positive behaviour, mental health, wellbeing, resilience and achievement, including the statutory aspects of Health Education.

In addition to timetabled PDL sessions, we will use vehicles such as circle times, assemblies, school displays and themed events such as Children's Mental Health Week and Anti-Bullying week, to promote positive mental health and well-being. This will include promotion of the NHS five steps to well-being:

1. Connect with other people
2. Be physically active
3. Learn new skills
4. Give to others
5. Pay attention to the present moment (mindfulness)

In KS1, we use 'Zones of Regulation' and PATHS to help children recognise, express and manage their emotions in appropriate ways.

There are also peer-led ways in which mental health and well-being are promoted – for example, our peer mediators, cyber ambassadors, and well-being ambassadors.

### **Targeted Support**

As well as the universal curriculum on offer, we will also offer targeted materials and support for pupils where there is an identified need or a higher risk. This includes:

- Nurture groups for different age groups
- ELSA sessions and regular staff 'check-ins'
- 'Meet and greet' support
- Small group and individual interventions for emotional well-being, social skills and speech and language – this includes specific approaches such as Drawing and Talking, Lego therapy
- Young Carers group
- Service families group
- Individual support plans, devised according to need
- Anxiety workshops for Y6 pupils
- Specific transition programmes for individuals with identified risks

In some cases, a pupil's mental health needs may require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, emotional based school avoidance and other complex needs. We make links with a range of specialist services and have regular contact with the services to review the support and consider next steps as part of monitoring the pupils' provision. School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the Inclusion Manager/SENCO or Home School Link Worker following the assessment process



and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents and carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs.

### **Involving Parents and Carers**

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting children with mental health needs.

To support parents and carers we

- have an 'Open Door Policy', encouraging parents to let us know if there are any issues which may affect their child in school
- provide access to a home-school link worker, available on the gate each morning, via email and through booked appointments in school
- provide information and signposting to organisations through Parentmail and on newsletters on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- provide access to workshops and information meetings for example, through the school nursing service or with our home-school link worker or senior mental health lead
- support parents and carers with children with mental health needs through sensitive and supportive regular meetings and signposting.

### **Supporting and Training Staff**

We recognise that if staff are to be able to support children with their mental health and well-being, they must also be supported to look after their own and each others' well-being. As a school, we signed up to the DfE Staff Well-being Charter. In doing so, we have committed to developing a long-term strategy for improving staff wellbeing that will:

1. Prioritise staff mental health
2. Give staff the support they need to take responsibility for their own and other people's wellbeing
3. Give managers access to the tools and resources they need to support the wellbeing of those they line manage
4. Establish a clear communications policy
5. Give staff a voice in decision-making
6. Drive down unnecessary workload
7. Champion flexible working and diversity
8. Create a good behaviour culture
9. Support staff to progress in their careers
10. Include a sub-strategy for protecting leader wellbeing and mental health
11. Hold ourselves accountable, including by measuring staff wellbeing

Specific provision already in place includes:

- A focus on staff mental health and well-being in staff meetings and communications
- PDL team consider staff well-being, as well as that of children
- Communication strategy in place with guidance given to teachers regarding managing emails, and information shared with parents to manage expectations regarding online communication
- Termly staff forums to give staff a voice in decision making and problem solving
- Annual governor staff questionnaire
- Leadership open to flexible working requests
- Consideration given to staff workload when considering policy and practice review, and when implementing school improvement plans



- Planned programme of continuing professional development (CPD) for all staff, in addition to wide access to targeted CPD for individuals to support them in their role.
- Menu of professional reflective practice and development opportunities e.g coaching with Assistant HT, peer mentoring, pupil centred solution focused meeting with Inclusion Manager.
- A clear and consistent behaviour policy.
- Documented approach to family friendly leave, more generous than county guidance.
- Access to supervision and support for staff working with children with high needs.
- Governor consideration of Headteacher well-being, providing access to supervision and support.

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identify mental health needs early in pupils and know what to do and where to get help. A regular programme of CPD for staff ensures that all staff who work with pupils are supported to develop their awareness and understanding of mental health and well-being in pupils. In addition, those staff with a specific responsibility have more specialised training and, where appropriate, access to supervision from other professionals. Additional CPD is supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more pupils.

### Monitoring and Review

The implementation and impact of this policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Mental Health lead and the PDL team. However, development of the provision for mental health and well-being is on-going and needs to be adaptive to the needs of the school community.

Governors are involved in reviewing the impact of this policy through termly link visits where they carry out pupil interviews and consider the well-being of staff within their linked year group, as well as through the annual staff and parent questionnaires.

Policy launched: February 2022

Review date: Spring term 2023