Holtsmere End Infant and Nursery School

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Date: July 2025

Signed:

Nicola O'Connell – Headteacher

Jane Bisseker – Chair of Governors

Policy Statement

At Holtsmere End Infant and Nursery School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued. At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can 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.

At our school we:

- Help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
- Help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- Help children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- Promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they are valued
- Encourage children to be confident and 'dare to be different'
- Help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Providing opportunities to reflect.
- Access to appropriate support that meets their needs

We pursue our aims through:

- Universal, whole school approaches
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement.

• Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long term difficulties including attachment disorder.

Scope

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Medical policy and our SEND policy in cases where pupils mental health needs overlap with these. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for Behaviour and Anti-bullying, and PSHE and SMSC policies. It should also sit alongside child protection procedures.

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Nicola O'Connell Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Safina Razzaque Deputy Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Sunny Chandra SENCo and Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Francesca Turner Teacher Mental Health and Emotional wellbeing lead
- Governor for Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but we will also use the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

Targeted support

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- Our wellbeing mantra, instilling self-belief and resilience: I am kind, I am brave, I believe in myself
- Circle time approaches or 'circle of friends' activities.
- Targeted use of JIGSAW resources. Managing feelings resources e.g. 'Calm down kit' including 'worry eaters'
- Primary Group Work/Mental health and wellbeing groups
- Therapeutic activities including art, lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques.
- Protective behaviours

- ELSA
- Mental Health Support Team group and 1:1 activities

The school will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate including:

- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire
- Leuven Scales (Emotional literacy scales)

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support.

Identifying needs and Warning Signs

All children take part in a 'Check-In' service each morning, indicating how they are feeling. This can be addressed immediately so that the child feels listened to and they can receive appropriate support and hopefully have a positive day.

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which 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 with the designated child protection and safeguarding officer or the emotional wellbeing lead as appropriate.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide

- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Working with Parents

In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website
- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g. through parent forums.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their child.
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

Working with other agencies and partners

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- The school nurse
- Educational psychology services
- Behaviour support through DESC (Dacorum Education Support Centre)
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Therapists
- Mental Health Support Team (NHS)

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 students safe.

The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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 pupils.

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