



Holly Park School

Pupil Well-Being Policy

Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health

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)

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

Why the need for a Mental Health policy?

The Government's Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision Green Paper (Department of Health, Department of Education 2017) included a focus on early intervention and prevention and the central role of schools. A key theme is that every school or college is encouraged to identify a Designated Senior Lead for Mental Health to oversee the approach to mental health and well-being.

Young Minds charity reports that **one in five young adults**, and **one in ten children have** a diagnosable mental health disorder. That translates to roughly **three children in every classroom**.

Mental health issues can affect a student's emotional wellbeing as well as their educational attainment. Developing a Mental Health Policy is a first starting point in establishing a whole school approach that not only addresses pupil mental health but also shows pupils and their parents that the school is committed to the wellbeing and mental health of the pupils. A mentally healthy school is one that has a whole-school approach to the topic of mental health and sees the mental health of its students, staff, and parents as everybody's responsibility.

Why mental health and well-being is important

At Holly Park Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. All children go through ups and downs during their school career and some face significant life events. The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy". Schools can be a place for children and young people 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 children's wellbeing 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, and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children 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 to be a school where:

- All children are valued.

- Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma.
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued.
- Bullying is not tolerated
- Children are encouraged to be resilient

Purpose of the policy

This policy sets out:

- How we promote positive mental health.
- How we prevent mental health problems.
- How we identify and support children with mental health needs.
- How we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent or address mental health problems
- How we support children and families

The following members of staff will be designated as wellbeing officers

Ann Pelham	Headteacher – Designated Senior Mental Health Lead
Maria Michael	Deputy Head – Mental Health First Aider Deputy Designated Senior Mental Health Lead
Kathy Puzey	Learning Mentor - Mental Health First Aider Deputy Designated Senior Mental Health Lead
Diana Kelly	SENDSCO – Mental Health First Aider
Eve Mehtar	AHT Personal Development – Mental Health First Aider
Andrea Needham	Pupil Support Officer – mental health First Aider

Whilst all staff are involved in the mental health and wellbeing of children, it specifically involves:

- The Designated Senior Mental Health Lead
- The Mental Health First Aiders
- The Learning Mentor
- The PHSE Lead
- The SENDSCO
- The DSL
- The Pupil Support Officer
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead
- The Designated Lead for Looked After Children

We have a designated governor responsible for Mental health and wellbeing

This policy links with the UN Rights of the Child

Article 3

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.

Article 24

Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must work to provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that children can stay healthy. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

Definition of mental health and wellbeing

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 wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/young people 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
- Develop resilience in situations which they find challenging.

A whole school approach to promoting positive mental health

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise. This encompasses seven aspects:

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.
2. Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.
3. Helping children to be resilient learners.
4. Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
5. Early identification of children who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services.
6. Effectively working with parents and carers.
7. Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues.

Staff roles and responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, 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 children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need. All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as: physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They should also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

At Holly Park Primary School, we take a whole school approach to mental health

The following members of staff are designated as wellbeing officers

Ann Pelham	Headteacher – Designated Senior Mental Health Lead
Maria Michael	Deputy Head – Mental Health First Aider
Kathy Puzey	Learning Mentor - Mental Health First Aider
Diana Kelly	SENDSCO – Mental Health First Aider
Eve Mehtar	Assistant Head (Personal Development) – Mental Health First Aider

Mental Health and Wellbeing for children also involves:

- The Learning Mentor
- The PHSE Lead
- The SENDSCO
- The DSL
- The Pupil Support Officer
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead
- The Designated Lead for Looked after Children

We have a designated governor responsible for Mental health and wellbeing

We have a Pastoral Team which meets weekly and consists of:

- Deputy Head – The Lead Designated Teacher for Safeguarding, School Lead for the Barnet’s Resilience Programme,
- Children’s Co-Ordinator, SENCO, Safeguarding Team
- Learning Mentor – Mental health First Aider, Safeguarding Team, member of Resilience Programme
- Pupil Support Officer – attendance lead

All members of staff should record concerns about a child. These are confidential and are logged as a cause for concern on our online system - CPOMs. The Pastoral Team monitors these, notices patterns and takes relevant action.

Supporting children’ positive mental health

Teaching about Mental Health

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

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.

We ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

We teach units on health and wellbeing within the PHSE curriculum

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Awareness of feelings Keeping well and clean Looking after myself	Healthy People Keeping Safe About my body	Emotions and feelings Healthy Lifestyles Keeping Safe Smoking and basic first aid Parts of the body	Mental health Rights and responsibilities Healthy lifestyles Growing and changing Alcohol and decision making	Mental Health and wellbeing Personal safety Healthy lifestyles Puberty Legal & illegal drugs	Healthy lifestyles Drugs, risk and media Moving On Mental health & online safety Puberty & relationships Sex education Personal safety - FGM

We believe the school has a key role in promoting children’s positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. We have developed a range of strategies and approaches including:

- Weekly Talk Times so that children can discuss concerns, listen to one another and explore solutions
- Worry Box in every class
- Bubble Time and Happy / Sad faces where children can ask for help
- One to one sessions to talk with our Learning Mentor
- One to one sessions to talk with our Learning Mentor and school dog
- Solution Focus work with our Learning Mentor
- Group sessions with our Learning Mentor
- Buckets in every class – filling buckets vs dipping buckets to promote positive relationships
- Our school dog
- Feel Good Fridays

- Anti-Bullying Ambassadors
- Use of the Restorative Approach to listen to all children and solve issues
- School Council, Learning Council, Eco Council, Healthy Living Council, Junior Travel Ambassadors and Rights Respecting Champions to encourage pupil voice
- Rights Respecting School to raise awareness of showing respect, listening to each other and ensuring we are all safe
- Assemblies and lessons to raise awareness about mental health
- Mini Mentors and Play Leaders – children supporting one another at playtimes
- Wellbeing week – whole school focus on doing things which make us feel good
- Mindfulness sessions with Learning Mentor and in class
- Lessons about resilience

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.

Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil may be 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 on CPOMs and also with a member of the pastoral team.

Possible warning signs 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
- Lack of resilience
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- 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 secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Managing disclosures

A pupil 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 pupil 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 pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'. For more information about how to handle mental health disclosures sensitively.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing on CPOMs – cause for concern.

Confidentiality

Staff must be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. They should never promise the child that they will keep this to themselves, and should 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.

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.
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, 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. We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow-up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on CPOMs.

We are aware that parents and carers react in different ways to knowing their child has a mental health problem and we will be sensitive and supportive. We also aim to reassure by explaining that mental health problems are common and that help and advice are available. Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger and children may choose to tell their parents and carers themselves. We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Our primary concern is the children, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

Working with All Parents

We know that being a parent or carer is a challenging job and at times people need help. Our Learning Mentor is always available at the start of each day to talk with parents about any concerns they have. We run parenting classes (Parent Gym) and encourage parents to attend these. We also have parent champions.

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 who do have mental health needs. We are aware that parents and carers react in different ways to knowing their child has a mental health problem and we will be sensitive and supportive. We also aim to reassure by explaining that mental health problems are common and that help and advice are available. Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger and children may choose to tell their parents and carers themselves. We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Our primary concern is the children, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. 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 on the school website
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through parent meetings
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE

Links with external support services

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the School environment. However some children will need more intensive support from qualified practitioners at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that we work with to provide support to children with mental health needs and their families.

They are:

- CAMHS In Schools – Tier 2
- CAMHS – Tier 3
- Educational Psychologist
- Family Resilience Programme
- Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy and Counselling
- School nurse
- BYCAS

Identifying, referring and supporting children with mental health needs

Our approach:

- Provide a safe environment to enable children to express themselves and be listened to.
- Ensure the welfare and safety of children are paramount.
- Identify appropriate support for children based on their needs.
- Involve parents and carers when their child needs support.
- Involve children in the care and support they have.
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with children and keep parents and carers updated

Staff Training

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 children and know what to do and where to get help. Our Learning Mentor is a qualified 'mental health first aider'. We have run Inset for all our staff on identifying mental health problems and understanding how children's attachments impact on their emotional wellbeing.

Monitoring



This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Staffing & Pupil Welfare Committee.

Document Control

Revision History

Version	Revision Date	Revised By	Revision
1.0	Written October 2018	Maria Michael	Policy written as a draft
1.1	Spring 2019	S&PW	Reviewed & adopted
1.2	Spring 2020	S&PW	Reviewed & adopted
1.3	Spring 2021	S&PW	Reviewed & adopted
1.4	Spring 2022	S&PW	Reviewed & adopted
1.5	Re written November 2022	Ann Pelham	Written in response to DFE guidance and the DSMHL training
1.6	Spring 2024	S&PW	Reviewed & adopted

Signed by

	Name	Signature	Date
Headteacher	Ann Pelham		March 2024
Chair of Governors	Clare Hegarty		March 2024

Distribution

Version	Shared with	
1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff via school server• Parents via Website• Governors via meetings	

Review

Date for next review

Spring term 2026

Holly Park Mental Health Strategy

