



Leamington Federation
Sydenham Primary School and Lighthorne Heath
Emotional Well-being and Mental Health Policy

This policy is to be read in conjunction with:

- SEND Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Reducing Stress at Work Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Preventing Radicalisation Policy
- Staff Handbook and Behaviour Code of Conduct
- Online Safety Guidance
- Equal Opportunities Guidance
- Home-School Agreement



UN convention on the Rights of the Child.

This policy reflects the principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation. At Sydenham and Lighthorne Heath Primary Schools, we recognise achievement in putting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of our practice to improve well-being and help all children realize their potential. Children's rights are learned. Taught, practiced, respected, protected and promoted in our schools.

Rationale

Government guidance (Mental Health and Behaviour, March 2016; Promoting Children and Young People's Health and Well-being, March 2015) informs us that one in ten young people aged 5 to 16 has a clinically diagnosed mental health disorder and one in seven has less severe problems. The Department for Education states, "in order to help their pupils succeed, schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy."

Across The Leamington Federation, we work towards positive emotional well being and mental health for all the children and adults who make up our school communities.

Aims

By promoting emotional well-being and mental health, we aim to:

- Remove barriers to cognitive development and learning.
- Provide a safe and happy environment conducive to success so that everyone meets their potential.
- Involve parents/carers in school life and the progress of their children.
- Raise achievement and attainment.
- Safeguard adolescent well-being by building childhood resilience, self-esteem and confidence.
- Reduce stress and improve work-life balance.
- Improve morale and motivation.

Leadership and Management

In the Leamington Federation, staff have a collective ownership of emotional well-being and mental health with responsibility well distributed amongst staff at all levels. The Executive and Associate Head Teachers drive the vision for well-being, supported by the SENDCo and Lead Nurture Practitioner. All adults (teachers, teaching assistants, administrators and support staff) deal with one another in a nurturing manner and cultivate a climate where it is possible to talk about problems in a non-stigmatising way. We have a named governor (Richard Butler) with responsibility for well-being and the governing body are instrumental in setting policy and monitoring progress.

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

Well-being is fundamental to cognitive development and learning. The teaching of well-being at our school is addressed through PSHE lessons using the SEAL materials, the Taking Care Scheme and PSHE Association's mental health lesson plans. In addition, morality and personal growth are taught through discrete Citizenship lessons, assemblies, Circle Time and themed events as well as being embedded throughout the curriculum. Sex and healthy relationship education is delivered using the Channel Four "All About Me" materials and supplemented with visits from the school nurse who delivers lessons on puberty and personal hygiene.

All pupils are taught an awareness of "mindfulness" using "Sixty Mindful Minutes" and "Take a Break" resources. A growth mindset is also encouraged through the use of Learning Characters which develop the following dispositions:

- Resilience
- Perseverance
- Reflection
- Imagination
- Safe risk taking
- Cooperation
- Concentration

Emphasis is placed upon pupils celebrating mistakes and embracing challenge by selecting their own level of differentiated learning. Teaching in all classes is mixed ability and based upon the principle that everybody can be successful, thus reducing barrier emotions such as embarrassment and fear.

Well-being is further supported through the extended curriculum. Trips and after school clubs offer new experiences and build the soft skills necessary to be successful in life. In addition, the arts are valued as a means of promoting self-esteem, confidence and expression with regular opportunities available for pupils to participate in music, theatre and visual arts. All pupils also work towards completing their “100 Things To Do Before You Leave Sydenham.”

Ethos and Environment

We have a nurturing ethos and see the early intervention and consistent support of children’s emotional and mental health as part of our duty of care. Each member of staff undergoes a thorough induction covering the support of well-being and participates in a rigorous programme of ongoing professional development.

Staff take a holistic teaching approach that cares for the whole child in a safe and supportive classroom environment which is conducive to learning and is based upon mutual respect and positive relationships with clear rules, routines and expectations for behaviour. At all times, staff aim to promote within pupils the inner resources they need to thrive even in stressful circumstances and to develop the following protective factors in pupils:

- Secure attachment
- Good communication skills
- Problem solving skills and a positive attitude
- Experience of success and achievement
- Capacity to reflect
- Humour
- Opportunities to take up valued roles and responsibilities

ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences)

We are a trauma-informed school. All staff are trained to be able to identify adverse experiences that can impact on a child’s development and their response to stress. Staff understand the importance of healthy brain development in a child’s early years and the impact of toxic stress. Our school understands that experiencing adversity in childhood can have a significant impact over a person’s life course, resulting in ill health; poor well-being; and, in some cases, premature death. Staff understand what it means to look at adverse childhood experiences through a ‘trauma informed lens’, and that key protective factors can help to mitigate the impact of ACEs and different strategies that can help build resilience.

Mental Health First Aiders

Within the staff there are Mental Health first Aiders, trained by MHFA England. Our school Mental Health First Aiders know how to identify, understand and support children, young people and adults who may be experiencing a mental health issue. Our Metal Health First Aiders are trained to have:

- An in-depth understanding of mental health and the factors that can affect wellbeing
- Practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues
- Confidence to step in, reassure and support a person in distress
- Enhanced interpersonal skills such as non-judgemental listening
- Knowledge to help someone recover their health by guiding them to further support - whether that's self-help resources, through their employer, the NHS, or a mix

Targeted support and Referral

We recognise that some children are at greater risk of experiencing poor mental health, namely:

- Young Carers
- Those who have had previous access to CAMHS
- Those living with parents/carers with a mental illness
- Those living in homes experiencing domestic violence

We aim to identify potential problems at an early stage and intervene with an appropriate response, calling on external agencies and making referrals as necessary. The impact of well-being interventions is monitored and progress tracked on a half-termly basis.

Pupils with significant need can access the services of a counsellor, education mental health worker or therapeutic art. They may also enter one of our two nurture Groups: Rainbows (for pupils with long-term, emotional/behavioural/mental health needs) or Sunshine Group (a shorter-term intervention for children with lower level difficulties or who may be experiencing a personal crisis in their lives.)

Any member of staff worried about a pupil's emotional well-being or mental health should record their concerns using CPOMS (or a Green Form: "Logging a concern about a child's safety or welfare") which should be passed to a Designated Safeguarding Officer as per the school's Child Protection Policy.

Pupil Voice

We recognise that involving pupils in decisions that impact on them can benefit their emotional health and well-being by helping them to feel part of school and the wider community and to have some control over their lives. Student opinions are voiced through School Council, Learning Detectives, pupil well-being questionnaires, the IEP/ILP target setting process and pupil conferencing.

Working with Parents/Carers

We understand that the family plays a key role in influencing children's emotional health and well-being and seek to engage with parents/carers as much as possible. Close ties with families are established at the very beginning of a child's school career. Staff are approachable and available at the start and end of the day for informal discussions with parents/carers. In addition, families are invited to Pupil Progress Review Meetings,

IEP/ILP Review meetings and information sessions and are encouraged to attend PTA events, performances and themed learning events.

We aim to keep lines of communication open and transparent and share information via letter, text, email, Twitter, our newsletter and our website.

Staff Development, Health and Well-being

We ensure that staff are trained to increase their knowledge of emotional well-being and to equip them to be able to identify mental health difficulties in pupils. This includes being able to refer them to relevant support within school or from external services. Training takes the form of face-to-face sessions, online modules and twilight staff meetings.

The Senior Leadership promotes a healthy work life balance through a sensitive system of Appraisal and by providing a listening ear when staff are experiencing a personal difficulty and offering compassionate leave as necessary. They also encourage “mindfulness” through the “Fifty Ways To Take A Break” scheme which advocates spending quality time with loved ones or relaxing through hobbies and leisure activities.

This policy was ratified: September 2023

And will be reviewed: September 2024

Signed by the Head teacher: 

Chair of Governors: Richard Butler

Appendix: Useful Contacts

PSHE Association: lesson plans and accompanying resources to support the teaching of emotional well-being and mental health plus advice for teachers about to tackle these sensitive subjects.

www.pshe-association.org.uk

SEAL Materials: lesson plans and accompanying resources to support the teaching of personal, social and health educations.

webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110809101133/nsonline.org.uk/node/87009

Feeling Good: activity sheets aimed at children aged 4-7.

www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/publications/feeling_good.aspx?ID=510

Time to Change: a collection of resources including videos, lessons, assemblies, and toolkits for teachers and youth workers to reduce stigma and discrimination faced by people with mental health problems

www.time-to-change.org.uk/youngpeople

Childhood Bereavement Network: resources to help schools deal with bereavement within the school

www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/for-schools-professionals.aspx

MindEd: online advice and information from trusted sources and will help you to understand mental health.

<https://www.minded.org.uk/>

Place2Be: provides counselling services for children and support for teachers and parents. It also provides continuous professional development training sessions that address themes related to children's emotional well-being in schools, such as safeguarding, attachment, understanding risks and resilience and others. These sessions help reduce teacher and staff stress by providing practical approaches that help them deliver effective support.

www.place2be.org.uk/

AcSEED: encourages all UK schools to achieve and maintain an acceptable threshold of support and to align on best practices that provide a common language and understanding between schools, parents, young people, and associated organisations and charities. The AcSEED initiative was founded by young people with direct personal experience of mental illness at a young age, and is entirely dedicated to supporting the emotional well-being and mental health of young people.

www.acseed.org/

Nurture Group Network: promotes the development of nurture groups.

www.nurturegroups.org/

Circle time: an approach used in classrooms with a group of children that can help them to develop social and emotional skills.

www.circle-time.co.uk/page/our-approach/quality-circle-time-1

Zippy's Friends: a programme that helps young children, aged five, six and seven, to develop coping and social skills.

www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk/zippy-s-friends.html

Childline School Service: is a service that uses specially trained volunteers to talk to primary school children about abuse. The aim is to give them the skills to protect themselves and know where to go for help. There is also a free helpline for children and young people. The helpline number is 0800 1111

How to get up and go when you are feeling low: ia booklet providing top tips for Year 4 students when they are feeling upset or stressed.

www.annafreud.org/data/files/CAMHS_EBPU/Publications_and_Resources/year4_help4pupils.pdf