# Elmwood Infant and Nursery School

## Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

### Spring 2023



Article 29 'Education must develop every child's personality, talents
and abilities to the full'
Article 23 ' Every child has the right to special education and care if they need it

# Elmwood Infant School & Nursery
## Mental Health and Well Being Policy

**POLICY Reviewed: Spring 2023**      Named Mental Health Lead: Helen Walsh
**DATE OF next REVIEW: Spring 2024**    Named Governor for Mental Health**:** Annette Williams

**Why mental health and wellbeing is important.**

At Elmwood Infant and Nursery School, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community; pupils, 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.

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".
Our school is a place where children can 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, our school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting their wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our school has an important part to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children.
Our role is in:
- **Prevention**
  To create an ethos, environment and curriculum that builds resilience, ensures children are able to manage times of change and stress and nurtures positive mental health and wellbeing
- **Identification**
  To understand what mental health needs are and recognise any emerging issues
- **Early Support**
  To provide evidence based interventions for children identified with needs eg; Nurture groups, ELSA support, Drawing and Talking, play therapy and social skills groups.
- **Access to Specialist support**
  To work effectively with outside agencies for children identified with high needs.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and be a school where;
- All pupils are valued
- Pupils have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- Pupils 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

**The Purpose of this policy**
This policy sets out:
- How we promote positive mental health
- How we prevent mental health problems
- How we identify and support pupils with mental health needs
- How we train and support all staff
- Where parents, staff and pupils can get advice and support

**Definition of mental health and wellbeing**

"*Mental health is defined as a state of wellbeing in which every individual recognises 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 his or her own community.*" World Health Organisation, August 2014

Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems.
We want all children 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, anti-bullying, PSHE, SEND and the Rights Respecting strategy. It also links to our SEND Information Report for parents. Links with the 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.

**A whole school approach to promoting positive mental health**
We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help pupils become more resilient, be happy and successful and prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses 7 aspects:
1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience that everyone understands
2. Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to
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 resilience

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

**Staff roles and responsibilities**

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 a 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 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 *(see appendix 1 on risk and protective factors).*

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals.

The Mental Health Lead
- Leads on and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health
- Provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates
- Keeps staff up to date with information about what support is available
- Liaises with the PSHE Coordinator on teaching about mental health
- Is the first point of contact and communicates with mental health services
- Leads on and makes referrals to services if children need more intensive support

Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Support vulnerable children and their families and may identify any existing or emerging mental health issues or children at risk of developing mental health issues

Attendance officer
- Monitors attendance, works with families and is well placed to recognise any patterns of low attendance that maybe linked to emerging issues

SENDCO
- Helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including pupils whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision

Learning Mentor and ELSA's
- Support the mental health needs of targeted pupils in the Nurture group and in 1:1 or small group emotional literacy interventions

PSHE subject leader
- Takes responsibility for resourcing and monitoring delivery of the PSHE curriculum
- Takes the lead on developing a healthy school

ICT subject leader
- Takes responsibility for e-saftey and a curriculum that teaches children how to stay safe on line

Class teachers
- Plan and deliver high quality PSHE lessons
- Develop a positive and nurturing environment in the classroom and are well placed to recognise any emerging issues

Support staff, Breakfast club/After school club staff
- Develop a positive, nurturing environment in the classroom and in additional provisions and are well placed to recognise any emerging issues

Lunchtime supervisors
- Demonstrate a positive, nurturing and sensitive attitude to all children in the lunch hall and the playground and are well placed to recognise any emerging issues

Office Staff
- Welcome parents/carers at first point of contact
- Collect health information on admission
- Manage the administration of medicines, administer asthma medication and are well placed to recognise any emerging issues.
- Alert senior leaders if they have any concerns related to the mental health and wellbeing of any parent/carer or child.

## The Governing Body

The named governor with responsibility for mental health works with the Head Teacher and the mental health lead in supporting the development of high quality provision and evaluating the impact of support for pupils with mental health difficulties and taking steps to support the staffs' well-being.

## Supporting Staff Wellbeing

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue. The governing body will work with the school leaders to encourage a healthy work life balance. This includes taking steps to make sure staff do not suffer stress-related illness because of their employment. School leaders consider the risk of stress among their workforce and take steps to remove or reduce the risk as far as possible. Staff sickness absence and staff turnover is regularly reviewed and monitored to identify any problem areas. The school is part of the local authority Employee Assistance Programme and makes referrals to Occupational Health to ensure work place adjustments are implemented if necessary. There are opportunities for flexible working hours and discretionary leave to support staff with periods of ill health or family commitments. All Class Teachers have a report writing day at home during the summer term and adjustments to INSET days have been made to enable the summer term to finish earlier. There is no expectation to respond to emails outside of working hours. Staff are signposted to activities or APPS that may support them through a wellbeing board in the staffroom. Workload reviews are undertaken regularly with staff and, where possible, changes are made in response.

## Supporting Children's Wellbeing and Positive Mental Health

We believe we have a key role in promoting pupils positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our school has developed a range of strategies and approaches including;

- A Rights Respecting approach
- Transition activities between each year group and between settings
- Reward systems for positive behaviour
- Classroom charters
- Wellbeing week
- Nurture groups
- ELSA support
- Play Therapy
- Social skills groups

- Weekly celebration assembly
- Working in partnership with parents/carers
- Information about positive mental health and where to go for help and support within the school and outside of the school.
- Leaflets on a range of areas that can impact on mental health and wellbeing and how to access help.

**Teaching about Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing**
Through PSHE, we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help pupils to be more resilient, understand about mental health and help reduce the stigma of mental health problems.

Children will learn:
- To recognise, name and describe feelings including good and not so good feelings
- Simple strategies for managing feelings including mindfulness
- How their behaviour affects other people
- About empathy and understanding other people's feelings
- To cooperate and problem solve
- To motivate themselves and persevere
- How to calm down
- About change and loss and the associated feelings (including moving home, losing toys, pets or friends)
- Who to go to if they are worried
- About different types of teasing and bullying, that these are wrong and unacceptable
- How to resist teasing or bullying, if they experience or witness it, whom to go to and how to get help

**Identifying, referring and supporting children with mental health needs**
Our approach is to:
- Provide a safe environment to enable pupils to express themselves and be listened to
- Ensure the welfare and safety of pupils as paramount
- Identify appropriate support for pupils based on their needs and make referrals to outside agencies if necessary
- Involve parents and carers when their child needs support
- Involve pupils in the care and support they have
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with pupils and keep parents and carers updated

**Early Identification**
Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways including:
- Monitoring behaviour books and attendance
- Staff report concerns about individual pupils to the Mental Health lead
- Weekly vulnerable meetings and regular inclusion team meetings for staff to raise concerns
- Half termly pupil progress meetings
- A parental information and health questionnaire on entry
- Gathering information from a previous school at transfer or transition
- Daily contact with parents/carers at the classroom door
- Termly parental meetings
- Enabling pupils to raise concerns to familiar members of staff
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns through the class teacher, TA or to the Mental Health lead

**Supporting and training staff**
We want all staff and governors 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. An on-going programme of CPD will include training on the protective and risk factors, types of mental health needs and signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health problems or that there is a child protection concern. Three members of staff have recently qualified as Mental Health First Aiders and three members of staff have attended Wellbeing training funded by Erasmus.

Risk signs might include:
- Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits
- Lowering academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Secretive behaviour
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE
- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Drugs or alcohol misuse
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the Mental Health Lead or Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Staff will be aware that mental health needs such as anxiety might appear as non-compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships, delayed development or SEND.

If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the school's child protection procedures are followed. If there is a medical emergency then the school's procedures for medical emergencies are followed.

**Disclosures by pupils and confidentiality**
We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgemental to pupils who disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of pupils is paramount and staff listen rather than give advice. Staff are clear to pupils that the concern will be shared with the Mental Health Lead or the Designated Safeguarding Lead and recorded in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil.

**Assessment, Interventions and Support**
All concerns are reported to the Mental Health Lead. A range of pupil information will be gathered and the Boxall profile and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires will be used to assess children's difficulties when appropriate. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating. Children will be referred to outside agencies including the Educational psychologist, the Education Wellbeing Practitioner or CAMHS if necessary.

**SEND and mental health**
In some cases a mental health difficulty may amount to a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND). Some children with SEND may have an increased likelihood of developing mental health difficulties. For example, children with Autism Spectrum Disorder are significantly more likely to have conditions like anxiety.

**Vulnerable groups and mental health**

Children in Need, Looked After Children and dis-advantaged children are more likely to experience the challenge of social emotional and mental health issues than their peers. They may be living in very chaotic circumstances and be suffering or at risk of suffering abuse, neglect and exploitation. They may also have less support outside school.

**Provision**

| Need | Evidence-based Intervention and Support | Monitoring |
|------|------------------------------------------|------------|
| Highest need | Referral to EP/CAMHS for assessment<br><br>Request for statutory Education, Health and Care assessment if required<br><br>Additional 1:1 support<br><br>Play Therapy | All pupils needing targeted individualised support will have an Individual plan drawn up setting out<br>• The needs of the pupils<br>• How the pupil will be supported<br>• Actions to provide that support<br>• Any special requirements<br>This plan maybe an SEND plan, a Behaviour Support Plan or individual targets for ELSA or Nurture.<br>Pupils and parents/carers will be involved in the plan. The plan and interventions are monitored, reviewed regularly and evaluated to assess the impact. |
| Some need | Nurture group<br><br>ELSA support<br><br>Social skills groups<br><br>Lunchtime friendship club | |
| Low need | General support from Class Teacher and support staff<br>Circle time<br>PSHE curriculum | |

**<u>Parent/Carer</u>**

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 their children with mental health needs. Partnership with parents plays a key role in enabling children with mental health difficulties to achieve their potential.  In order for parents to be active partners, it is essential that they fulfil the following responsibilities:
- Ensure children attend school regularly and on time;
- Attend parent consultation and review meetings;
- Meet with other agencies/services as required;
- Support work at home;
- Keep the school fully informed of assessments conducted outside the school and provide copies of any reports written (physical, psychological, medical, behavioural social and emotional).

We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

**<u>Pupil</u>**

We aim to involve children in all aspects of their education but obviously their age and level of understanding determines just how far they can participate.  Where appropriate we support and encourage children to:

- Make best use of all support offered to reach the targets, through differentiation and provision of appropriate resources and teaching strategies, including Teaching Assistant support
- Be involved in reviewing the targets on their SEND Support Plan
- Tell us about the things they feel they are good at, things they find difficult and what they feel would help them to achieve their targets.

Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools Review of published policies and information Research report October 2018

Mental health and behaviour in schools November 2018

*For general information and support*
www.youngminds.org.uk champions young people's mental health and wellbeing
www.mind.org.uk advice and support on mental health problems
www.minded.org.uk (e-learning)
www.time-to-change.org.uk tackles the stigma of mental health
www.rethink.org challenges attitudes towards mental health