



Parkside Primary School

Well Being & Mental Health Policy

Reviewed January 2025

Well-Being & Positive Mental Health Policy

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)

At Parkside Primary School we promote a caring, supportive environment in which each individual is valued and respected. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, including their mental health and emotional wellbeing, and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We have high expectations for all and aspire to achieve excellence. We are 'Proud to Shine'.

At our 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 all our children and staff need the foundation of positive mental health to benefit fully from all of the opportunities available to them. However we appreciate that everyone can experience life challenges at times and these can make us vulnerable.

Our role in school is to ensure that everyone is helped to manage times of change and stress, be resilient, be supported and can access help when they need it. We also aim to educate our pupils so that they learn about what they can do to maintain their well-being and 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.

We are committed to raising awareness, increasing understanding and ensuring that our school can and does make a difference by providing a mentally healthy environment where our pupils and staff feel safe, secure and able to achieve and experience success and well-being.

At Parkside we believe -

A Mentally Healthy Environment is a place where children:

- Are valued
- Are protected from harm
- Are listened to and any concerns are acted upon
- Have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- Have opportunities to participate in activities that encourage belonging
- Have opportunities to participate in decision making
- Have opportunities to celebrate academic and non-academic achievements
- Have their unique talents and abilities identified and developed
- Have opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Have opportunities to reflect
- Have access to appropriate support that meets their needs

- Are surrounded by adults who model positive and appropriate behaviours, interactions and ways of relating at all times
- Can develop and build resilience
- Know that bullying is not tolerated
- Understand that Positive mental health is promoted and valued
- Have a Growth Mindset

A Mentally Healthy Environment is a place where staff:

- Have a range of strategies that support their mental health
- Have recognition of their work-life balance
- Have the mental health and well-being of the staff reviewed regularly
- Feel valued and have opportunities to contribute to decision making processes
- Celebrate and recognise success
- Are able to carry out roles and responsibilities effectively
- Are provided with opportunities for CPD both personally and professionally
- Have their unique talents and skills recognised and opportunities provided for development
- Have time to reflect
- Have the right to work in an environment that supports and promotes positive mental health for everybody

A Mentally Healthy Environment is a place where parents/carers:

- Are recognised for their significant contribution to children and young people's mental health
- Are welcomed, included and work in partnership with schools and agencies
- Are provided with opportunities where they can ask for help when needed
- Are signposted to appropriate agencies for support
- Are clear about their roles and expectations of their responsibilities in working in partnership with our school
- Opinions are sought and valued and responded to
- Strengths and difficulties are recognised, acknowledged and challenged appropriately

The implementation of this policy:

- Will raise awareness as to how the whole school community can look after their own mental health and that of others
- Will help to de-stigmatise mental health
- Will support pupils, staff and parents/carers and provide opportunities that enable everyone to reach their potential
- Will strengthen relationships and provide opportunities for different ways of working
- Will promote and strengthen resilience throughout the whole school community and empower everyone to face life's challenges

Healthy Learning Environment

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems, and be a school which:

- Provides opportunities that promote positive mental health, through the curriculum.

- Promotes opportunities for positive skill based learning through Circle Time, PSHE, playtimes, and nurture groups.
- Welcomes and promotes parental engagement and support.
- Actively promotes a Growth Mindset.
- Helps pupils to regulate their emotions by developing and practising life skills such as conflict resolution and reflective thought.
- Introduces enabling thoughts in Assemblies by celebrating children's achievements both in and outside of school.
- Promotes a Healthy Eating ethos.
- Encourages physical participation through sports, PE, Dance and other enjoyable recreational activities.

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. The content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but 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 have members of senior staff who are trained in 'Mindfulness' which has been shared amongst staff and pupils.

Our Deputy Headteacher is a qualified trainer in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and teaching staff have now been trained as well as having successfully completed 'Embedding a Strategic Approach in Senior Mental Health Lead' from Carnegie School of Education.

Risk Factors

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. School can also offer a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships. At Parkside we offer our pupils that safe place where they can develop a sense of belonging and feel able to trust and talk openly with adults about their problems. We acknowledge that there are experiences that our pupils may be subjected to that can have a negative impact on their emotional well-being. These could include:

- Overt parental conflict including domestic abuse
- Parental divorce
- Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted)
- Verbal abuse
- Inconsistent or unclear discipline
- Physical, sexual, neglect or emotional abuse
- Parental psychiatric illness
- Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder
- Death and loss – including loss of friendship
- Socio-economic disadvantage
- Having to move home
- Birth of a sibling

- Changes to school
- Transition to Secondary School
- Overly high family expectations of achievement
- Adverse Childhood experiences
- Attachment Disorders
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Subject to Child Protection or Child in Need Plan

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of signs which indicate a pupil, colleague or parent/carer is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should **always** be taken seriously.

Possible warning signs could include:

- Changes in eating habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn or isolated from friends or family
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Actual or talking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure or uselessness
- Secretive behaviour
- Repeated visits to the medical room with real or no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Low self-esteem
- Bullying
- Discriminative behaviour / language towards others
- Phobias
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Stealing
- Defiance
- Aggression
- Bladder control / visits to the toilet
- Attachment disorders
- Decreased concentration and memory
- Irritability, impatience, anger
- Confusion
- Repetitive compulsive behaviour e.g. excessive checking
- Distress, upset, crying
- Loss of interest in personal appearance
- Risk taking behaviours

If a member of staff becomes aware of any of these signs they should report it on CPOMs or a Cause for Concern Form (midday assistants) and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) as soon as possible.

All of our classrooms have 'Let's Talk' boxes and pupils are encouraged to put a note in it or speak to a member of staff if they are upset or concerned about anything at all.

Senior members of staff and members of the Pastoral Team wear 'Worry Monsters' on their lanyards to remind children that they can speak to staff about any concerns. There are also signs around the school which have photos of staff members that are part of the Pastoral Team. Our pupils are also encouraged to let staff know if one of their friends or peers may be upset or worried. We explain to our children that by seeking help and advice for a friend they are taking responsible action and being a good friend. They should also be aware that their friend will be treated in a caring and supportive manner.

What the school might do:

- Talk to the child/staff member/parent/carer
- Contact parents/carers if for a child
- Arrange for Befriending Sessions
- Signpost to Support Agencies
- Make a Referral to our School Nurse
- Arrange a referral to CAMHS
- Advise parents/carers to ask their GP for a referral to CAMHS Primary Care Worker
- Refer to the Educational Psychologist
- Arrange an appointment with a counsellor
- Make a referral to MASH if there is a risk of significant harm.

Support for Pupils might include

- Befriending sessions from ELSA trained staff
- 'Barnaby' Lunchtime nurture room
- Gardening Club
- 5 a-day Fun Fitness breaks during the day in class
- Healthy eating club
- Change 4 life club
- Circle of friends sessions
- 'Mile a day'
- Support from Staff who have attended the MHFA (Mental Health First Aid) training.
- 'Mindfulness' sessions
- Additional visits to Secondary schools
- Eating lunch with senior members of staff
- Lunchtime Friendship club
- Themed days/weeks – e.g. Children's Mental Health Week and Anti-bullying week

Support for Staff might include

- All staff have access to 'Workplace Options', an Employee Assistance Programme, who offer confidential assistance with any work, personal or family issues.
- Termly Health & Safety Newsletter
- Support from Staff members who have attended the MHFA (Mental Health First Aid) training.
- Referral to Occupational Health.
- Opportunities to work collaboratively with other staff members to encourage team building and informal support i.e. Themed Writing Days for the children.

- 'Mindfulness' sessions
- Well-being events (breakfast provided etc.)

How the impact of this policy will be measured

- Pupil/Staff/Volunteer well-being observations
- Staff/Governor/class and school council meetings
- Feedback from the whole school community via questionnaires and conversations, formally and informally
- Training and development internally, for example 'Safeguarding, Mental Health and Wellbeing' inset
- Induction and professional development of Staff and Volunteers
- Stress questionnaires

Roles and Responsibility

- The promotion of Positive Mental Health and Emotional Well-being, and raising the achievement of all pupils is the responsibility of the whole school staff and governors.
- The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will demonstrate through their personal leadership the importance of this policy, and ensure that all staff are aware of it and understand their role and responsibility in relation to it.
- The Governing body will assess and monitor the impact of this policy every 3 years
- Staff will be aware of the implications of this policy for their planning, teaching and learning strategies, as well as behavioural issues.
- Pupils will be made aware of how this policy applies to them as part of the school aims and values.
- Parents and carers will be encouraged to participate fully in implementing this policy in partnership with the school.

This policy should be read alongside our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, SEND Policy and Report, Equality Policy, Medical Conditions Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Health and Safety Policy.

With Reference to;

DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024

DfE Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions 2014, updated 16 August 2017

DfE Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools November 2018

DfE Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future February 2016

Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing (Updated for 2021) PSHE Association.

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