

Compassion – Courage – Hope – Integrity – Justice  
Respect – Responsibility - Wisdom



**Herne Bay Junior School**

# **Positive Mental Health Policy**

**Policy Agreed: February 2019**

**Review Date: February 2022**

## **Policy Statement**

*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 Herne Bay Junior School, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils.

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 pupils affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental health overlaps with, or is linked to, a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

### **The Policy Aims to:**

- Promote positive mental health in all pupils and staff
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents or carers

### **Lead Members of Staff**

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

- Rowena Evett- Collins - Assistant Head Teacher, Inclusion Lead and DSL
- Mel Kingman, Chris Thomas, Sammy Black- Deputy DSLs
- Hollie Edwards- Director of Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Jenny Botzet - Medical Officer
- Caroline Gower- Behaviour lead
- Helen Jones - SENCO
- Chris Thomas - CPD lead
- Sharon Easton - PSHE lead

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Director of Mental Health & Wellbeing in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated safeguarding lead, the headteacher or the deputy DSLs. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the Medical Officer or first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the SENCO.

### **Individual Medical Protocols**

It is helpful to draw up an Individual Medical Protocol for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents, the Medical Officer and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

### **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.

The content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching, but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, if issues arise, for themselves or others.

We promote that physical health and mental wellbeing are interlinked and the understanding that good physical health contributes to good mental wellbeing and vice versa.

We will follow guidance from both the DfE and PSHE Association to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe, non-judgemental and sensitive manner that ensures children feel able to explore their misconceptions or questions about mental health.

### **Signposting**

We will ensure that pupils, parents and staff are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as corridors, shared areas and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking by ensuring pupils understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at

- How to access it
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen next

### **Warning Signs**

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil 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 Director of Mental Health & Wellbeing or the Assistant Head teacher and Inclusion Lead.

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
- 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 first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'.

All disclosures should be recorded on CPOMS and held on the pupil's confidential file. This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the Director of Mental Health & Wellbeing who will offer support and advice about next steps.

### **Confidentiality**

We should be honest with regard to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on, then we should discuss with the pupil:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

Information should never be shared about a pupil without first telling them. Where possible the pupil's consent should be received though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent. Every pupil must be reminded information will need to be shared if there is a safeguarding concern.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Director of Mental Health or a DSL. This helps to safeguard personal emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence; and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. (We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with... does the child need to know that the adult is seeking support for their own personal wellbeing?).

If a child gives reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the Lead DSL (or Deputy DSL) must be informed immediately.

### **Working with Parents**

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, a sensitivity in approach should be maintained, Before disclosing to parents a consideration of the following questions (on a case by case basis) should be made:

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, and 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. An acceptance of this should be demonstrated (within reason) giving the parent time to reflect.

Further sources of information should be highlighted and leaflets should be given to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that has been shared. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too, e.g. parent helplines and forums.

Clear means of contacting the school with further questions should be provided and consideration should be given to booking in a follow-up meeting or phone call right away as parents may have further questions as they process the information. Each meeting should

be finished with agreed next steps and a brief record of the meeting should be kept on the child's confidential record.

### **Working with All Parents**

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
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- 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

### **Supporting Peers**

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, consideration on a case by case basis should be made as to which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the pupil who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support
- Things friends should avoid doing or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend may need help (e.g. signs of relapse)

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

### **Training**

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their annual safeguarding training to enable them to keep pupils safe.

Staff will be regularly signposted to all relevant online Mental Health training and a record of training will be held by the CPD lead.

Training opportunities for staff that require more in depth knowledge will be considered as part of the performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, twilight training sessions will be hosted for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the CPD Lead, who may also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

**Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in February 2022.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to the Director of Mental Health & Wellbeing via phone 01227-374608.