

# Wootton Bassett Infants' School

## Pupil Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy

Updated: May 2022

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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)

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

- ✚ Promote positive mental health in all our children
- ✚ Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues and factors which affect pupil's well-being
- ✚ Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health and issues affecting pupil's well-being
- ✚ Provide support to our children suffering mental ill health
- ✚ Work in partnership with parents or carers of pupil's struggling with their well-being or mental health and any other professionals involved in supporting them with this

### **Intent**

At Wootton Bassett Infants, we aim to promote positive mental health and well-being for our whole school community; children, staff, parents, and carers, and recognise how important mental health and emotional well-being is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We have a supportive and caring ethos, and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued.

We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. Persistent mental health problems may lead to children having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age. At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's responsibility and that we all have a role to play.

*At our school we aim/seek to:*

- Help our children understand their emotions and feelings better
- Help our children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- help our children socially to form and maintain positive relationships
- promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they have a voice
- help our children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks

*We promote a mentally healthy environment through:*

- promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging
- promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making/consultative processes
- celebrating academic and non-academic achievements (from within school and outside of school)

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- providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- providing opportunities to reflect on and learn from their feelings and experiences
- providing access to appropriate support that meets their needs (within school and from external agencies, where appropriate)

*We pursue our aims through:*

- consistent whole school approaches and processes
- support for children going through recent difficulties including bereavement and other family related issues/loss
- specialised, targeted approaches aimed at children with more complex or long-term difficulties

### **Lead Members of Staff/Wellbeing Team**

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health and wellbeing of our children, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Jenny Pearce- Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead
- Alison Pass- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Tom Hill- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Steph Noyes- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Tiff Hughes- Emotional Literacy Support assistant -ELSA

### **Implementation**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our children to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but we will also use the PSHE scheme and PSHE Association guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

Our Relationships and Sex Education curriculum (RSE) also helps to support the children's mental health and wellbeing. RSE develops the children's emotional, social, and cultural development, and involves learning about relationships, healthy lifestyles, diversity, and personal identity. RSE aims to give children essential life skills to build positive, respectful, and enjoyable relationships with others. RSE also aims to give children the skills to stay safe both on and offline. RSE, within PSHE, helps to explore children's own attitudes and values and develops their self-esteem and confidence to view themselves in a positive way.

Please see **Appendix 1** on how the school supports the children's positive mental health in school.

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### **Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Mental Health and well-being**

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

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health, well-being, and resilience that everyone understands.
2. Helping our children to develop positive social relationships, support each other and seek help from staff when they need to.
3. Helping our children to be resilient learners.
4. Teaching our children social and emotional skills and an age-appropriate awareness of mental health issues.
5. Early identification of children who have mental health needs and then planning support to address their needs, including working with specialist services, if appropriate.
6. Building positive relationships with parents and carers to enable effective support to help their children.
7. Supporting and training staff to develop their understanding and skills.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing adults and children sharing their concerns around well-being and mental health issues. We aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages the sharing of concerns and builds an understanding of mental health and well-being issues.

### **Targeted support**

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual children or groups of children which may include:

- circle time approaches or 'circle of friends' activities
- managing feelings resources e.g., 'worry boxes' and 'worry eaters'
- managing emotions resources such as 'the incredible 5-point scale'
- ELSA support groups
- therapeutic activities including art, Lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques

The school will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate including:

- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire
- The Boxall Profile
- Emotional literacy scales

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### **Identifying Needs and Warning Signs**

Staff will raise concerns for a pupil's wellbeing based on changes in their behaviour, demeanour or following conversations between children and/or parents and carers. There may be other indicating factors such as:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs will always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or the emotional wellbeing lead, as appropriate.

If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health/well-being or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive, and non-judgemental.

### **Working with Parents**

In order to support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website.
- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g., through parent forums.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get this, if they have concerns about their child.
- Publish on our school website our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy.
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health for their own children.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE.

When a concern has been raised the school will:

- Contact parents and carers and meet with them as soon as possible following the concern being raised. In most cases parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as those involving safeguarding issues.

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- Offer information to take away and places to seek further information.
- Make a record of the meeting.
- Discuss how the parents and carers can support their child.
- Keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions being put in place within school to support their child.

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger. We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. The children are our primary concern, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority.

### **Working with other agencies and partners**

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or following advice given to school staff from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to children with mental health needs and their families, including:

- The school nurse
- Educational psychology services
- Behaviour support
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers

### **Staff Training**

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

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more children.

### **Signposting**

We will ensure that the children, and their parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support.

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### Useful links

- ✚ <https://www.annafreud.org/parents-and-carers/> offers advice and guidance to help support our children and young people who may be struggling with poor mental health.
- ✚ [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) champions young people's mental health and wellbeing
- ✚ [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) advice and support on mental health problems
- ✚ [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk) (e-learning)
- ✚ [www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk) tackles the stigma of mental health
- ✚ [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org) challenges attitudes towards mental health

### Links to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- ✚ Keeping Children Safe in Education
- ✚ Computing and E-Safety
- ✚ RSE (Relationships and Sex education)
- ✚ Behaviour & Discipline
- ✚ Anti-Bullying
- ✚ Equality and Diversity
- ✚ Pupil Wellbeing
- ✚ Safeguarding & Child Protection

### *Review process*

*This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum.*

*It is next due for review in February 2025.*

*Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis.*

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### Appendix 1

#### **Supporting Children's Positive Mental Health**

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

##### ***Pupil-led Activities***

- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health via the School Council

##### ***Transition Support***

- Support for vulnerable children, for example, Speech and Language (SALT)
- support small group work such as Lego Club or Social Communication groups
- Transition meetings with parent/carers, children, and relevant staff
- Key Adults might support junior school visits with vulnerable children

##### ***Class Activities***

- Worry boxes
- Mindfulness and breathing/meditation in class
- Special mentions for displaying the School Values
- Kindness trees

##### ***Whole School***

- Wellbeing Focus, established through PSHE scheme
- Assembly themes
- Using the Power of Reading to explore themes and learn about emotions, difference, loss, bullying, change, resilience, etc.

##### ***Small Group Activities***

- Small friendship, social skills groups
- Lunch Club support
- Teaching about Mental Health and Emotional Well-being
- Through PSHE we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help our children to be more resilient, understand about mental health and help reduce the stigma of mental health problems.