South Hill Primary School

<u>Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy</u>

<u>2022/23</u>

<u>Reviewed:</u> Kim Albery (Wellbeing Lead)
<u>Date:</u> 1.2.23.

Why Mental Health and Wellbeing is important

At South Hill 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. Persistent mental health problems may lead to pupils having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age.
The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice identifies Social, Emotional and Mental Health as one of the four areas of Special Educational Need.

All children go through ups and downs through their school career and some face significant life events. An increasing number of children aged 5 to 16 years have a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on their quality of life relationships and academic achievement.
The Department of Education (DfE) recognise that, 'In order to help their pupils succeed, schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy.'

Schools should be a place for children and young people 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. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting pupils wellbeing and can help promote a sense of belonging and community.
Our role in school is to ensure that they are able to manage times of change and stress, be resilient, are supported to reach their potential and access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that pupils learn about what they can do to maintain 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.
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

- In addition to children's wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and wellbeing.

1. Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out
- how we promote positive mental health
- how we endeavour to prevent mental health problems
- how we support pupils and families with mental health issues

2. Definitions of Mental Health and Wellbeing

We use the World Health Organisations definition of mental health and wellbeing:
….a state of wellbeing 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 of her or his community.
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

3. Links to other Policies

This policy links to the following policies.

- Safeguarding
- Children Looked After
- Positive Behaviour
- Child Protection
- Bullying and Harassment (Staff)
- Attendance
- Online-Safety
- Bereavement
- Personal Social Health Education (PSHE)
- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion policy
- Equality and Diversity
- Hertfordshire Wellbeing and Behaviour Strategy, 2020-2023
- Mental Health and Behaviour in School's, 2018 (DFE)

Links with the school '**Positive Behaviour Policy**,' are particularly important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need. Behaviour can be a message.

4. **Identifying Further Needs and Warning Signs**

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators
- Possible changes in eating/sleeping patterns
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in mood activity or mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

5. **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 seven aspects:

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviour that support mental health and resilience that everyone understands

2. Helping pupils to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to

3. Helping pupils to be resilient learners

4. Teaching pupils social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health

5. Early identification of pupils 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. We aim to be a "Just talk school."

6. **Roles and Responsibilities**

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

- Safeguarding/Child Protection Team (Designated Safeguarding Leads, DSL)
- Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including pupils whose mental health problems mean they need special education provision
- School Nurse
- Mental Health Support Team including: Art/Creative Play Therapist, School Counsellor and Trainee Emotional Literacy Support Assistant ELSA
- There is a wellbeing link governor

7. **Supporting Pupil's Positive Mental Health**

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

Working with Parents

- 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
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children
- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have any concerns about their child

Pupil led Activities

- Peer Mentors to support behaviour at break and lunchtimes
- School Council
- Year 6 Buddies
- Wellbeing leaders
- Play Leaders

Transition Support

- Visits to South Hill prior to starting Reception (with and without parents/caregivers)
- Soft start for new Reception pupils.
- Transition meetings with Nursery Schools and attendance at any meetings for SENCO for vulnerable children
- Support for vulnerable children for examples, Speech and Language (SALT)
- Transition meeting with parent/carers, pupils and relevant staff
- Yearly transition booklet created for our anxious and vulnerable children
- Key adults might support secondary school visits with vulnerable children
- Additional visits to Secondary School
- Group support sessions for anxious Year 6 children prior to transferring to Secondary School.

Class Activities

- Worry box
- Sit and Stop (Mindfulness)
- Zones of Regulation for children to recognise and manage a range of emotions
- Movement breaks planned with the days' timetable e.g. Go-Noodle, Active Maths
- Growth Mind set
- Reflection Tables

Whole School

- Mental Health Week
- Five ways to Wellbeing
- Assembly themes – Just Talk Week and Anti-Bullying Week
- Use of Social Stories to explore themes and learn about emotions, difference, loss, change, resilience etc.
- Bespoke PSHE Scheme
- Displays and information around the school about positive mental health and where to go for help and support
- Daily mile
- Reception children have a Year 6 Buddy who plays with them at designated times in the year
- Weekly Mental Health and Wellbeing updates in our School Newsletter
- Webpages to support Wellbeing and signpost Parents/caregivers
- Very Active School Choir and enthusiastic singing assemblies
- Forest School for all year groups annually
- World Book Day

- Online safety learning
- Road safety workshops
- International Day
- Friendship bench
- South Hill Music Festival
- Active lunchtimes with play equipment such as hoops and balls provided
- PTA events e.g. silent disco, Christmas and Summer Fayres, Mothers and Father's Day secret gift stalls
- Whole School Wellbeing Questionnaire
- NSPCC Numbers Day

Individual Support
- Pupils with medical needs: If a pupil has medical need then a detailed Medical Care Plan is compiled with support from the school nurse in consultation with parents/carers. These are discussed with all staff who are involved with the pupil
- The school will arrange for children to access support from external agencies such as ADD-Vance, PALMs, or the School may receive support from Dacorum Educational Support Centre who offer advice and support for children who have Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties, if required
- The School regularly accesses the Autism Education Trust Website and has a named champion for autistics children: Inclusion Manager and Mental Health Lead
- Gade Family Support provide access to a Pupil Support Worker who is able to with children on a 1:1 basis, following a referral and assessment of need
- Specialist support through our School based play therapist and School Counsellor
- Paediatricians
- Behaviour support/DESC
- Nurture Club (indoor and outdoor)
- Rock Steady band, Dance classes, Magical Maths, Mad Science (all these clubs are cheaper for PP students and Rock Steady offer opportunities for staff to attend)
- Sports Coach Mentor
- After School PE clubs such as; netball and football
- The School Nursing service can provide six sessions of support to a pupil and is able to work on a 1:1 basis, following a referral and assessment of need
- Talking and Drawing therapy
- Therapy dog

Supporting Parents/Caregivers

- Building positive parent/carer partnerships to enable early interventions to accessing mental health and wellbeing support. This could involve liaising with the SENCO and referring children to their own GP or CAMH's

Staff Support

- All staff have received The Therapeutic Approach to Behaviour, STEP ON training and the school positive behaviour policy has a therapeutic approach to behaviour management
- All staff receive regular update training in allergy and asthma support
- All TA's/MSA's have basic first aid training/safeguarding training
- Reception staff are training in Paediatric First Aid
- Trauma and attachment training

At South Hill School, we recognise the importance of good mental health and wellbeing supports our pupils to make progress and be ready to learn both academically and socially.