

## Positive Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing the EJ Way

***3 children in every classroom have a mental health problem.***

(Young Minds October 2018)

***Mental health is 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 to her or his community.***

(World Health Organisation)

### Introduction

At Ely St John's Primary ('ESJ'), we aim to place positive mental health and emotional wellbeing at the centre of school life. The five statements below, created by pupils, underpin the 'EJ Way' ethos of our school community:

We look after each other.  
We are proud to work together.  
We are excited to learn new things.  
We know how to share thoughts and feelings.  
We are kind to ourselves.

The EJ Way highlights the importance we place on supporting every child's emotional wellbeing so that they are happy and ready to learn as well as supporting positive mental health and wellbeing for staff, parents and carers. Our policies on SEND and anti-bullying alongside our therapeutic approach to behaviour, inspired by Cambridgeshire Steps, are based on the understanding that all children need the foundations of positive mental health to be able to fulfil their potential academically, personally and socially.

At ESJ, we recognise that at times anyone may need additional support to maintain or develop positive mental health and emotional wellbeing. We are committed to raising awareness, increasing understanding and ensuring that we can and do make a difference by providing an environment where all people feel safe, secure and able to achieve and experience belonging, success and wellbeing, and supporting children, staff and parents and carers affected both directly and indirectly by mental health issues.

### Objectives

This policy aims to be a practical, relevant and useful tool outlining ESJ's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, and supporting those affected by mental health issues. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors. It should be read in conjunction with our Medical Policy in cases where a child's mental health problem overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue, and the SEND policy where a child has an identified special educational need. This policy should also be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding and Child Protection policies should more serious issues arise.

The policy outlines:

- Lead Staff
- Promoting positive mental health across the school community by:
  - Nurturing a culture of openness
  - Raising awareness and understanding of mental health and wellbeing issues
  - Effective signposting
- Concerns about Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing
  - Monitoring
  - Early warning signs in children and adults
- Procedures for referral and accountability
  - Graduated response for children
  - Graduated response for staff

- Disclosures
  - Managing disclosures
  - Confidentiality
  - Informing Parents or Carers
- Training
- Key Documents
- Review

## **Lead Staff**

All staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for everyone in the school community.

Staff with a specific relevant remit are:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead: Liz Bassett (Head)
- Designated Persons for Child Protection: Liz Bassett (Head), John Henson (Deputy Head) , Chris Ashley (Office Manager)
- SENCO: Anna McGuinness
- Step On Tutors: Anna Mc Guinness, Kim Hambley
- Pastoral Support: Karen Johnson
- Mental Health Champion: Kerry Tipping
- Staff Wellbeing Champion: Allison Brown
- Named Governor for Mental Health: Liz Every
- PSHE Lead: Helen Pitt
- E-Safety Lead: Ben Killick
- Lead First Aiders: Jacqueline Shooter, Tina Chamberlain

## **Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing at ESJ**

### **A culture of openness**

*We look after each other. We know how to share thoughts and feelings. We are kind to ourselves.*

The EJ Way promotes a culture of openness, support and community. We promote the positive mental health of our school community by creating opportunities to talk and share feelings. We offer an open door policy with children, parents and carers to encourage the sharing of issues around mental health and emotional wellbeing.

A distinctive feature of the ESJ staff community is the positive, caring and supportive atmosphere among colleagues, supported by the Staff Wellbeing Champion. The Senior Leadership Team and Mental Health Lead also offer an open door policy to support staff as issues arise regarding their own mental health and wellbeing.

### **Raising Awareness and Understanding**

To support children, we will:

- Teach the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to help keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe as part of our PSHE curriculum.
- Follow the Cambridgeshire PSHE schemes of work and SEAL where appropriate to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.
- Determine the specific content of lessons by the specific needs of the cohort. There will always be an emphasis on enabling children to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.
- Create a culture of openness that supports children to speak about how they are feeling and share concerns with adults.
- Hold assemblies and workshops, involving relevant external agencies as appropriate.
- Nurture a growth mind-set approach to learning.

- Promote an annual healthy lifestyles week.

To support staff, we will:

- Provide regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of regular child protection training. Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the Head, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.
- Raise awareness of The *MindEd learning portal*<sup>2</sup> which provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.
- Make information available about support for mental health and wellbeing issues on the school's website and in staff areas. The Mental Health policy will be readily available to all teaching and non-teaching staff.
- Promote a healthy work life balance.
- Nurture a sense of staff community through activities outside of school e.g. Christmas meals, quiz nights, exercise classes.

To support parents and carers, we will:

- Keep parents informed about the topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.
- Share the Mental Health policy and the Safeguarding policy on the school website.
- Ensure parents are aware of who to talk to in school if they have any concerns about their child's mental health or wellbeing.
- Highlight sources of information and support for common mental health and wellbeing issues on the school's website and in public spaces around school.
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through newsletters, school website, workshops, coffee mornings.

### **Signposting**

We will ensure that children, parents and carers, and staff are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. We will display relevant sources of support on the school website, in communal areas and toilets as appropriate, and will regularly highlight sources of support to children within relevant parts of the curriculum. We will signpost parents to appropriate professionals for help and support.

## **Concerns about Mental Health and Wellbeing**

### **Monitoring**

We will maintain and update a register of children across school who have been identified as being vulnerable socially, emotionally or economically. The mental health and wellbeing of children is monitored for warning signs and supported by creating positive experiences.

We do this through:

- Following the Step On Behaviour principles.
- Discussing wellbeing with each other regularly and appropriately to ensure we raise staff awareness and sensitivity to children's needs
- Being aware of the contextual difficulties and the different situations children face in their lives outside of school.
- Arranging chat time with key adults.
- Communicating with parents.
- Leading circle times about feelings.
- Responses to wellbeing pupil questionnaires.
- Monitoring of attendance.

We also monitor the wellbeing of the staff. Some of the ways we do this is through:

- Conversations.
- Knowing our staff, spotting changes in behaviour or mood.
- Observing staffroom interactions.
- Monitoring professional performance.
- Monitoring absence.
- Absence-related policies e.g. back to work conversations.
- Responses to wellbeing staff questionnaires.

### **Early warning signs in children or adults.**

Staff may become aware of changes in behaviour which may indicate a child or adult is experiencing issues with his / her mental health or emotional wellbeing. These changes may 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 achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, anxiety, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Outward displays of distress e.g. head banging, nausea,
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Repetitive behaviours
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- Find leaving close adults difficult

This list is not exhaustive. These are also not always indicative of a mental health problem and could be for unrelated reasons.

### **Procedures for referral and accountability**

We aim to ensure there are clear procedures to help staff who identify children or adults with possible mental health problems, providing routes to escalate issues with clear referral and accountability systems.

***Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child should speak to the Head and Designated Safeguarding Lead and other relevant leaders (SENCO, Mental Health Champion). If the child presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary. Where a referral to outside agencies is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the appropriate lead staff.***

Working with others is vital to provide the right interventions for pupils with mental health problems that use a graduated approach to inform a clear cycle of support. This will usually entail:

- Initial monitoring
- In school strategies
- Advice from outside agencies
- An assessment to establish a clear analysis of the pupil's needs
- A plan to set out how the pupil will be supported; action to provide that support; and regular reviews to assess the effectiveness of the provision and lead to changes where necessary.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of another adult may wish to speak to the adult first, and encourage them to seek help and support. Alternatively they may wish speak to the Head to voice an initial concern.

### **Graduated Response for children - at each stage, agreed by parents**

1. **Preventative /Emerging Need (getting advice and help)** In school this response may include: Tailored lessons, chat time, use of the sensory room, use of the lunch club, communication with parents, social skills groups, PALS, individualised support strategies. It may also be appropriate to signpost parents to Family Worker Drop Ins.

This may lead to an individual provision map or risk management plan if initial strategies seem to show no impact. This may also include advice from a single agency or involve an Early Help Assessment.

2. **Complex Need / Targeted Services (getting more help)** This response may involve support from outside agencies in the locality team e.g. play therapists, school nurses, family workers, GPs, paediatricians, the Local Authority Counselling Service, Occupational Health. This is accessed via an Early Help Assessment and may entail support in the home also.
3. **Specialist Services (risk support / safeguarding / specialist assessment)** This response may involve a greater level of specialist support e.g. from Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH), educational psychologists. This may also require support from social care.

### **Graduated Response for staff**

1. **Preventative /Emerging Need (getting advice/getting help)** In school this response for staff may include, the Head supporting staff by: listening; discussing sources of local help e.g. family or friends as support networks; talking through the absence policy and explaining the procedures; arranging cover for particular events or to meet specific needs.
2. **Complex Need / Targeted Services (Getting more help)** In school this response for staff may include sign posting to self-referral options for help and advice; the application of absence procedures; short term revision of responsibilities to reflect need.
3. **Specialist Services (risk support / safeguarding / specialist assessment)** At this stage staff would be getting advice from outside professionals and may or may not have adaptations to working conditions depending on need.

## **Disclosures**

### **Managing disclosures**

At times, a child may choose to tell a staff member concerns that they have about their own emotions or well-being. All staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

All staff should respond in a calm, supportive and non-judgemental way.

Staff should listen rather than advise and their first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded on a Log of Concern form and shared with a designated person for Child Protection **immediately**, who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

### **Confidentiality**

Staff must be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. They should never promise the child that they will keep this to themselves, and should inform the pupil who they are going to talk to, what they are going to tell them and why it is important that they pass these concerns on.

### **Informing Parents or Carers**

Parents will usually be informed if a child makes a disclosure and staff need to be sensitive when sharing this with parents or carers. It can be upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and staff should give the parent or carer time to reflect.

When working with parents, staff should finish each meeting with agreed next steps and book in a follow-up meeting or phone call. A brief record of the meeting should be logged. Where possible, staff may highlight further sources of information to offer support.

**However, if a child gives reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents may not be informed and a Safeguarding referral may be made.**

### **Training**

All teachers have had basic mental health training from the YMCA and the Mental Health Champion is undergoing further training. Continued advice and support is also available for staff to access via the SENCO; Head or locality team. A governor is also undergoing training and is committed to monitoring the school's response to mental health.

### **Key Documents**

Safeguarding policies and Inclusion/SEND policy and procedure

Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2018

Effective Support for Children and Families in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire November 2018 (thresholds for early help, targeted and specialist support)

### **Review**

This policy was ratified by the Governing Body on 12.3.19 and will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum or sooner where necessary updates are viewed as necessary.