Positive Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing the EJ Way

3 children in every classroom have a mental health problem.

1 in 9 children have a mental health disorder in 2017; 1 in 6 children in 2020   (Place2be.org.uk)

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.

1.0   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.

2.0   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; pupils and their families. 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

3.0 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 (Mental Health First Aid trained): 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: Sharon Turner (children focused); Amy Grant (staff)
- Staff Wellbeing Champion: Allison Brown
- TA wellbeing champion: Beth Hartland
- Named Governor for Mental Health: Beth Hartland
- PSHE Lead: Helen Pitt
- E-Safety Lead: John Henson
- Lead First Aiders: Jacqueline Shooter, Charlotte Godfrey

4.0 Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing at ESJ

4.1 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.

4.2 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 which includes the aspect of mental health.
- Use of emotional literacy programmes
- Register of vulnerability and inclusion circles/ wellbeing updates

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 free online training or counselling services suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue or where requiring support.
- 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.
- Reinforce positive working conditions and codes of conduct

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.

4.3   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.

- *School website*
- *Professionals*
- *Mental health resources and websites*
- *Team Around the Child meetings*

5.0   Concerns about Mental Health and Wellbeing

5.1   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.
- Having an open culture for children to share their thoughts and feelings
- Arranging chat time with key adults.
- Communicating with parents.
- Leading circle times about feelings.
- Responses to wellbeing pupil questionnaires.
- Monitoring of attendance.
- Use of the Boxall Profile to assess social and emotional development
- Health and Well being Survey

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 interactions
- Open door policy with leaders
- Monitoring professional performance.
- Monitoring absence.
- Absence-related policies e.g. back to work conversations.
- Responses to wellbeing staff questionnaires.
- Mental health trained staff team

5.2 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 secretively
- Repetitive behaviours
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- Finding leaving close adults difficult
- Loss of confidence
- Lower tolerance or coping levels
- Lowering of usual performance

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

6.0 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 or an adult 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 to speak to a member of the Mental Health Team or the Head to voice an initial concern. The Mental Health Team will train and develop in order to better support adults in school.

6.1   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.

6.2   Graduated Response for staff

1.   **Preventative /Emerging Need (getting advice/getting help)** In school this response for staff may include, the Mental health Team 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.

7.0   Disclosures

7.1   Managing disclosures
At times, a child may choose to tell a staff member concerns that they have about their own or another person's 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 from or about a child / family 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.

7.2   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.

All staff will pass on personal disclosures from other staff where they feel that staff member is at significant risk of harm in line with the general duty of care.

7.3   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 any agreed next steps and book in a follow-up meeting or phone call if necessary. A brief record of the meeting should be logged. Where possible, staff may highlight further sources of information to offer support.

If a child gives reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents may not be informed if doing so places the child at immediate risk of harm however consents to make a referral are always necessary the school is requesting support from Early help services on behalf of the child or family.

8.0 Training
Teachers will have regular basic mental health training and the Mental Health team will undergo regular training to keep their knowledge and skills current. Continued advice and support is also available for staff to access via the Mental Health Team, Head or Locality Team. A named governor for mental health is also part of the team and will be trained appropriately.

9.0 Key Documents
Safeguarding policies and Inclusion/SEND policy and procedure
Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2020
Effective Support for Children and Families in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire November 2018 (thresholds for early help, targeted and specialist support)

10.0 Review
This policy was ratified by the Governing Body on 10th November 2021 and will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum or sooner where necessary updates are viewed as necessary.