

Hanging Heaton CE (VC) J&I School

Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Policy

This policy was written in consultation with staff, pupils, parents and professionals involved in mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Policy Statement

At Hanging Heaton C of E (VC) J & I School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. This policy is written to reflect the chosen aims and Christian values of our school.

We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued.

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 business and that we all have a role to play.

At our school we:

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings better.
- help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries.
- help children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- promote self esteem and ensure children know that they count.
- encourage children to be confident and 'dare to be different'.
- help 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. Our core Christian Values for this year are Trust, Compassion, Forgiveness, Thankfulness, Creativity and Wisdom.
- promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making.
- celebrating academic and non-academic achievements.
- providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others.
- providing opportunities to reflect.
- access to appropriate support that meets their needs.

We pursue our aims through:

- Universal, whole school approaches
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement.

- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long term difficulties including attachment disorder.

Scope

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Supporting Children with Medical Conditions policy and our SEND policy in cases where pupils mental health needs overlap with these. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for Positive Behaviour and Anti-bullying, and PSHE and SMSC policies. It should also sit alongside child protection procedures.

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Janet Potter:- Designated Senior Leader (child protection / safeguarding officer) & Deputy Mental Health and Emotional wellbeing lead.
- Sue Brooke-Mawson - Deputy Designated Senior Leader (child protection / safeguarding officer), Mental Health and Emotional wellbeing lead and Trained Youth Mental Health First Aider.
- Rev Mark Umpleby - Governor with responsibility for Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing.

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching but we will also use the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

Targeted support

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

- Circle time approaches or 'circle of friends' activities.
- Targeted use of SEAL resources.
- Managing feelings resources e.g. 'worry boxes' and 'worry eaters'.
- Managing emotions resources such as 'the incredible 5 point scale'.
- Therapeutic activities including art, lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques for specific children.

Signposting

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

Identifying needs and Warning Signs

All staff will consider the following where they believe a child may be at risk aimed at identifying a range of possible difficulties including:

- 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 student 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 designated child protection and safeguarding officer or the emotional wellbeing lead as appropriate.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and 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
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

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 about this, if they have concerns about their child.
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.
- 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.

Working with other agencies and partners

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- The school nurse
- Mental Health Support Teams (Trailblazer Project)
- Educational psychology services
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Therapists

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep students safe.

The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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 pupils.

Staff

The Governors of our school recognise their role in supporting staff mental health. They are committed to an open culture in which mental, physical and emotional wellbeing is taken seriously and in which staff are supported in order that they may seek any help and support they need.

Our school buys into the local authority *Employee Health Care* service. Staff can access this by either asking for a referral by the Head Teacher or self-referring using the form available on the wellbeing board in the staffroom. This display also provides information on how to access *CareFirst* telephone counselling support and reminds staff that their unions all provide emotional health and wellbeing support services.

Work/life Balance

The Governing Body recognises and appreciates the commitment staff show to the development of the school and the support they give to our children and families. However, they also understand the need for staff to maintain a good work/life balance and are committed to keeping workload under regular review. Any staff member who is feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope should speak to the Head Teacher as soon as possible. **Staff should not view this as a sign of weakness or failure.** Self-care is not

selfish and early support and intervention may be the difference in keeping the staff member in school, rather than having to take sick leave. Sensible attitudes to planning, preparation, marking and assessment are promoted at our school, as is staff adoption of a healthy lifestyle and taking time to rest, relax and rejuvenate during weekends and holidays. There is no expected arrival or departure time for staff, as long as contracted hours are fulfilled, and non-contact time may be taken off-site, as long as the Head Teacher or Office are informed in advance, for health and safety reasons. Emails, both sending and answering, should be kept to 'office hours' and it is down to the staff member's discretion whether they choose to access work emails during weekends and holidays. However, should a clear emergency arise, the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors will still contact staff regardless of time or day, usually by phone call, to keep them apprised of the situation.

Just as all staff have a responsibility for looking after the emotional health and wellbeing of our children and families, we also have a duty of care to look after each other. Staff should be sensitive to any unexplained changes in behaviour, appearance or attendance and be prepared to have an informal conversation about how that person is doing. Sometimes all a staff member needs is an opportunity to off-load to someone who will listen and not judge and this brings them back to their normal self. Sometimes more formal support is needed and at this point the staff member can be gently reminded about the local authority and union support in place to help them. Above all the staff member should be reassured that they have not always felt low, and so should have no reason to expect their mood will never improve.

If a staff member discloses to another staff member that they are having suicidal thoughts then it should be suggested that they go and speak to the Mental Health First Aider, who can advise and support them in accessing the correct care.

Date of Policy: September 2019

Review Date September 2020

Senior Member of Staff Responsible Mrs J Potter

Designated Member of Staff Mrs S Brooke-Mawson

Governor responsible Rev Mark Umpleby