

# Winthorpe Primary School

## Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy



WINTHORPE  
PRIMARY SCHOOL

*learning together - growing together*

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## **Our Values**

We want children at Winthorpe Primary School to be:

- Happy and Healthy
- Responsible and Caring
- Hardworking and Ambitious
- Respectful and Understanding
- Confident and Curious

## **Our Aims**

### Happy and Healthy

We feel that happy and healthy children will be enthusiastic and engaged learners. We aim to provide an exciting, interesting and fun curriculum supplemented by a range of extra-curricular activities that makes children want to come to school with smiles on their faces. We encourage our children to have healthy lifestyles and pride ourselves on the sporting provision that we offer for all our children.

### Responsible and Caring

We have a very friendly and family like atmosphere around school, centered on a caring approach and looking out for each other. Our rainbow house groups encourage children of all ages to bond, work and play together. We encourage our children to be responsible and help develop their maturity and common sense, enabling them to make the right choices. Positions of responsibility play an important and respected role within the school.

### Hardworking and Ambitious

We want children to aim high and enjoy the challenge of reaching their goals, being resilient and determined enough to deal with whatever is thrown at them. We set high standards for the children, in terms of expectations, effort and attainment, and expect all children to achieve their targets and make very good progress whilst at Winthorpe. We genuinely want all children to achieve their goals and encourage them to be ambitious and aspirational with their dreams.

### Respectful and Understanding

Our children are respectful, tolerant and understand others. They show this by being polite and attentive to everyone they meet. Holding doors open for others, saying good morning and listening to our friends are examples of how we can show respect on a daily basis. We respect that all people are different, in the way they look, things they believe and what is important to them. We understand that these differences make a vibrant, modern, British community, and want to celebrate and cherish these differences, and learn from them.

### Confident and Curious

We encourage our children to try new things and develop a curiosity about the unknown. When we open windows onto new horizons they are given the opportunity to expand their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. We want our children to feel secure enough to try new things without fearing making a mistake. We place great emphasis on the importance of representing the school and collaborating with others and the outside world. We provide a varied range of extra-curricular activities and stimulating school trips.

## **Mission Statement**

*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)*

At Winthorpe we want our children to be happy and healthy. Happy children will be enthusiastic and engaged learners who can achieve their best. Therefore, we aim to promote positive mental health for all members of our school community – pupils, parents, staff and governors. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils. These focus on building pupils' resilience with a view to preventing problems before they arise.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

## **Scope**

This policy describes our school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. It 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 pupil's mental health and wellbeing overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils;
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues;
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing;
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and wellbeing issues;
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers;
- Ensure pupils feel able to talk openly about their problems without feeling shame or stigma;
- Ensure pupils are supported to manage times of change or stress;
- Ensure pupils know what they can do to maintain positive mental health.

## **Senior Mental Health Lead**

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, our Senior Mental Health Lead is Mrs Sally Edmonds.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Mental Health Lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to Mr Rob Cook or Mrs Sally Edmonds.

If the pupil 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.

## **Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing**

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

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of each cohort of pupils but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

## **Signposting**

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

We will display relevant sources of support on the Mental Health and Wellbeing page of the school website and in the leaflet available from the school office. Termly wellbeing newsletters also inform the school community of new opportunities. We will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum.

Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking by ensuring pupils understand:

- What help is available;
- Who it is aimed at;
- How to access it;
- Why to access it;
- What is likely to happen next.

## **Warning Signs**

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil 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 to Mrs Sally Edmonds.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental;
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits;
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn;
- Changes in activity and mood;
- Lowering of academic achievement;
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide;
- Abusing drugs or alcohol;
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope;
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather;
- Secretive behaviour;
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly;
- Lateness to or absence from school;
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause;
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism;
- Parents/carers experiencing mental health problems.

## **Dealing with disclosures**

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the response should always be calm, supportive and nonjudgemental. Staff should listen, rather than advise and their first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety, not exploring the reasons why.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and passed to Mr Rob Cook or Mrs Sally Edmonds.

This written record should include:

- Date and time
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made;
- Main points from the conversation;
- Agreed next steps.

See 'Guidelines for dealing with disclosures' for more detail.

As DSLs, Mr Rob Cook and Mrs Sally Edmonds will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

## **Supporting mental health and wellbeing needs**

We have access to a range of sources of support both within school and from outside agencies. These include experienced staff in school who can support children, families and staff and making referrals to other professionals such as the Mental Health Support Team.

See Winthorpe Emotional Wellbeing flowchart for more detail.

## **Confidentiality**

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass on our concerns about a pupil, then we should discuss with the pupil:

- Who we are going to talk to;
- What we are going to tell them;
- Why we need to tell them.

We should never share information about a pupil without first telling them. Ideally, we should receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent, particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm.

Disclosures should be shared with Mrs Sally Edmonds; or passed directly Mr Rob Cook if it is a safeguarding issue. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil; it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support.

We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with. Parents should be informed if there are concerns about their child's mental health and wellbeing. See 'Guidelines for dealing with disclosures' for more detail.

## **Working with Parents**

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, a sensitive approach is required. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect. Further sources of information should be highlighted and leaflets available to takeaway where possible. Parents will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with such news. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

Parents often welcome support and information from school about ways in which they can support their child's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website;
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child;
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents;
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our termly wellbeing newsletters;
- 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.

### **Supporting Peers**

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings. It will focus on information from the pupil who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told;
- How friends can best support;
- Things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset;
- Warning signs that their friend help (e.g. signs of relapse).

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves;
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition;
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling.

### **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 to enable them to keep pupils safe

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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 developing situations with one or more pupils.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every four years as a minimum. It is next due for review in **November 2028.**

This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.