



PUPIL MENTAL HEALTH & EMOTIONAL WELLBEING POLICY

2023 - 24

Potter Street Academy
Part of the Passmores Co-operative Learning Community

Ratified by Local Governing Body on:	
Review Date	January 2024

Policy Statement

At Potter Street Academy, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff.

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 resilient
- 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
- Providing a dedicated, safe space to support pupil wellbeing
- 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 SEND policy in cases where pupils mental health needs overlap with these. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for 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:

- Kath Holland - Designated child protection / safeguarding officer/ School Lead for Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Amanda Hawkes - Learning mentor
- Kim Littlechild – Inclusion leader/SENCO
- Paula Cook – Assistant SENCO

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 the My Happy Mind program and PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort but we ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

Throughout the year, whole school assemblies will also address mental health, exploring different feelings we experience and teach ways of managing feelings to help children to have positive wellbeing. As a school, we also teach children about wellbeing using the recognized 'Five Ways To Wellbeing' strategy. Children are taught that:

- Connecting with others
- Taking notice
- Learning new things
- Giving to others
- Being Active

contribute to positive mental health and wellbeing. In addition, whole school events are planned throughout the year linked to national and local mental health and wellbeing activities.

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.
- Wellbeing champions
- Buddy support
- Managing specific feelings intervention
- One to one support with the learning mentor
- Therapeutic activities including art, Lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques
- One to one / group counselling with our school counsellor

Lead members of staff meet at least every three weeks to review children in need of support and progress of children and teaching staff are asked to identify children requiring additional support for their mental health and wellbeing.

The school will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate including:

- The Boxall Profile
- Emotional literacy scales
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires
- Anxiety Maps
- 'Roots and Fruits'

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. This includes how to access further support, both inside and outside of school hours. Further information is available on our website as well as parent newsletters and staff briefings.

Identifying needs and Warning Signs

School staff will look for 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 parents and 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

Pupil wellbeing surveys are also used as a means of identifying children who may need support with their mental health. Information is shared with class teachers and pupils who may be a concern are initially followed up by the learning mentor with parental involvement. Survey results are also used to prioritise aspects of mental health and wellbeing to address and action as a whole school.

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 school and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home
- Signpost to outside agency support where appropriate

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
- Educational psychology services
- Pediatricians
- EWMHS (Emotional wellbeing and mental health service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Therapists
- Mind West Essex

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. In addition to this four members of staff are trained in Mental First Aid.

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