

Kingsway Primary School
Mental Health and Well-being Policy



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Policy statement

Kingsway Primary School is committed to supporting the mental health and well-being of our pupils and staff. Supporting positive mental health is at the core of everything we do. Staff are aware that promoting and supporting positive mental health into the ethos of the school is everybody's responsibility. We know that children need positive mental health and well-being in order to learn and to achieve the best they can.

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 Organisation]

Every individual has mental health. Mental health is a continuum from positive to negative which is fluid and changing. We know everyone experiences challenges at different points in their life and each of us may need help to cope with them sometimes. We recognise our importance as educators in identifying and supporting children's mental health needs.

This policy is a guide to all staff, including teachers, teaching assistants, governors and non-teaching staff. It outlines our approach to promoting student and staff mental health and well-being. It should be read and understood alongside our other relevant policies.

Policy aims

For the staff/school

- To promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Alert staff to early warning signs and precursors of mental ill health.
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues.
- Seek additional help from other professionals/agencies when necessary.
- Support staff with their own mental health.

For the pupils

- Help children to understand their emotions and experiences better.
- Help children to form and maintain healthy relationships.
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers.
- Help children to become confident and promote their self-esteem.
- Help children develop resilience and ways of coping with set-backs.

Ways we promote positive mental health

- Celebrate achievements which are both academic and non-academic.
- Teach children about mental health and what it looks/feels like.
- Teach children healthy coping mechanisms.
- Ensure pupils feel valued for who they are.
- Develop children's sense of belonging within the school community.
- Promote children's voices by giving them opportunities for their voices to be heard.
- Adopting a whole-school approach for mental health and providing support for those who need it.

Key staff members

All staff members have a responsibility to identify the mental health and well-being needs of our students and each other. Certain staff members have a specific role in the process.

- Becky Cooke – SENCo, Mental Health Lead, Youth Mental Health First Aider.
- Rebecca Smith – Designated Safeguarding Officer and Youth Mental Health First Aider.
- Coleen Hibbard – Headteacher

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 immediate danger then follow usual child protection procedures. Where a pupil needs a referral to CAMHS, speak to the Mental Health Leader.

There is regular training for all staff about recognising and responding to mental health concerns as part of their child protection training. All staff have access to occasional Mental Health training from CAMHS and other professional bodies. There are two qualified Youth Mental Health First Aiders who have a more in depth knowledge and will disseminate their knowledge over time.

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy are included as part of our PSHE curriculum. Children will be taught generic coping strategies for times of stress or distress, how to identify and manage their emotions, how to boost their self-esteem, to develop confidence to ask for help for themselves or others and to know when to ask for help.

Individual Plans

Specific pupils will have a behaviour plan for their social, emotional and mental health needs. These are pupils who the staff or parents have identified as struggling with their mental health and/or behaviour. The behaviour plan will specify how the pupil reacts in different situations, which situations are difficult for them and how their teacher can support them. The plans are made in conjunction with the class teacher, parents, mental health leader and other relevant professionals.

Accessing support

For pupils

We will ensure that regular information is shared with parents about accessing support for their child's mental health needs. If parents are concerned about their child's mental health needs, they should speak to the class teacher in the first instance. If teachers are concerned about a pupil's mental health needs, they should speak to the Mental Health Lead. Some children will receive extra support and interventions to support their mental health and emotional well-being. Some children will receive support from CAMHs in school and others will be referred into the core CAMHs service.

For parents

We will ensure that parents are aware of the mental health support groups, charities and helplines available. Parents can speak to staff if they are comfortable in sharing their concerns. Staff can signpost or suggest groups or support that parents could access. Parental mental health affects our pupils and we want to support our parents in maintaining their own positive mental health.

For staff

We ensure that staff know who to speak to when they concerns about a child's mental health needs. Staff have access to sources of support for their own mental health and well-being, such as mental health charities, groups and helplines. Staff will receive support when working with children with mental ill health. Should any staff feel they are struggling with their mental health or well-being, they can speak to the Mental Health Lead or the head teacher if they feel comfortable. The leaders of the school make sure their staff well-being is a priority and ensure their workload allows for a healthy work life balance.

Precursors to mental ill health

Every individual has challenges in their life and needs support to cope with them. Some individuals may have 'precursors' to mental ill health which means they are more at risk of developing mental ill-health. Staff should be aware of these precursors in the children they are teaching.

Some of the precursors include (this list is not exhaustive):

- Parental mental ill health.
- Stress.
- Loneliness and isolation.
- Drug abuse or alcohol abuse (in the individual or their parents).
- Witnessing or experiencing abuse or neglect.
- Witnessing or experiencing domestic violence.

Warning signs of mental ill health.

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is currently experiencing mental ill health. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the mental health lead or designated child protection officer. 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, or becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in activity or mood.
- Excessive emotions or lack of emotions compared to the pupil's norm.
- Lowering academic achievement.
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide.
- Abusing drugs or alcohol.
- Expressing regular feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope.
- Secretive behaviour.
- Skipping PE, changing clothing style e.g. long sleeves in winter.
- Increase in lateness or absences.
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.

Staff should be aware of any major changes in the pupils' lives which could impact their mental health and well-being. These might include bereavement, health issues, social care involvement and major family disputes or break downs.

Managing disclosures

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

Do

- Listen without judgement.
- Validate the child's concerns.
- Be calm and supportive.
- Reassure the pupil it is not their fault.
- Show genuine concern and assure the child you are here to listen.
- Thank them for sharing their concerns with you and acknowledge that it took courage to do so.
- Record the disclosure in writing and report to the Mental Health Lead or Designated Safeguarding Officer. Tell the child you will pass the concerns on in order to seek further help.

Do not

- Try to 'jolly' the child out of their concern.
- Tell them it's nothing.
- Act overly shocked.
- Ask intrusive questions or appear to 'interview' the child.
- Use blaming or judgemental language.
- Give your opinion or try to advise the child immediately.

We would never share information a pupil has disclosed without first telling them we are doing so. Ideally, we would receive their consent but in situations where there is immediate danger this is not necessary.

Parents must be informed if there is a mental health concern about their child. We must ensure this is done sensitively and appropriately. Wherever possible, this meeting should take place face-to-face. Parents should be aware of the concerns, be signposted to further support they could access and be told about what the school intend to do to support their child.

Review

This policy will be reviewed at the minimum of every 3 years.