

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Policy written – March 2020

To be reviewed – March 2023

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Policy Statement

At The Acorn Federation, 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 schools 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 schools 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.
- 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 Medical 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 Behaviour, Anti-bullying, PSHE and SMSC. 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:

- Mrs Teresa Bosley – Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Mrs Stephanie McManus – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead at LLPS
- Mrs Louise Thomas – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead at MMPS
- Mrs Lisa Thomson – Positive Play Leader

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 PSHE Matters curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching. 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.
- Managing feelings resources e.g. 'worry boxes' and 'worry eaters'
- Positive Play sessions.

The school will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate including, e.g. The Boxall Profile.

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.

Working with Parents
In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- 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
- Educational psychology services
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service) and counselling services

Training
As a minimum, all staff will receive annual 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.