



With Love We Flourish

Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

November 2024

Our School vision:

'Let all that you do be done in love' 1 Corinthians 16:14

We wholeheartedly believe in nurturing individuals to be the best they can be in an inclusive environment where they feel valued, respected and know they belong.

Named Senior Mental Health Lead: **Sarah Taylor**

Named Governor with lead on mental health: **Tash Groves**

The opening quote from Our OFSTED Inspection Report

February 2024

The essence of Great Milton is captured perfectly in the words of the parent who observed, 'The school feels like a family. Kindness and happiness are at the heart, which is what makes the children feel safe and secure to grow as individuals.' Many other parents expressed similar views. Pupils, too, describe the school as being like 'one big family' with 'one big heart'.

Introduction

Why mental health and wellbeing is important

At Great Milton C of E Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. All children go through ups and downs during their school career and some face significant life events.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that:

"in order to help their children succeed, schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy".

Our school is a place for children and adults to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting children's wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a school where:

- All children are valued.
- Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma.
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued.
- Bullying is not tolerated.

In addition to children's wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and wellbeing.

Purpose of the policy

This policy sets out:

- How we promote positive mental health.
- How we prevent mental health problems.
- How we identify and support children with mental health needs.
- How we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent or address mental health problems
- Key information about some common mental health problems.
- Where parents, staff and children can get further advice and support.

Definition of mental health and wellbeing

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing

“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”.

Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/young people to:

- ✓ feel confident in themselves.
- ✓ be able to express a range of emotions appropriately.
- ✓ be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others.
- ✓ cope with the stresses of everyday life.
- ✓ manage times of stress and be able to deal with change.
- ✓ learn and achieve.

Links to other policies

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Medical Needs, Anti-Bullying, SEND and Equalities. Links with the School's Behaviour Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need.

A whole school approach to promoting positive mental health

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses seven aspects:

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.
2. Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.
3. Helping children to be resilient learners.
4. Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
5. Early identification of children who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services.
4. Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
6. Effectively working with parents and carers.
7. Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues.

Staff roles and responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff understand possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as: physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They should also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

Our Mental Health Lead

- Leads and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Leads on PSHE teaching about mental health.
- Provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates.
- Is the first point of contact with mental health services and makes individual referrals to them.
- Leads and supports the nurture provision across the whole school. We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to children with mental health needs and their families.

Sources of relevant support include:

- Our Senior Leadership Team
- Our Designated Safeguarding team
- Our Phase Leaders
- School support staff employed and trained to specialise in nurture provision (Ella Sansom-Elsa)
- Our SENDCO who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including children whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.

Supporting children's positive mental health

We believe the school has a key role in promoting children's positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems.

Our School has developed a range of strategies and approaches including:

Pupil-led activities

- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health.
- Peer mediation and Peer mentoring – children working together to solve problems and planned sessions where adults support children through the restorative process.
- Friendship Gate – Led by KiVa ambassadors at playtime/lunchtime.
- Transition Programme to secondary schools.

Class activities

- Praise mechanisms where children can be praised for certain duties, tasks or things they have done and have them celebrated in class
- Worry monsters /cushions - a similar mechanism where children can anonymously share worries or concerns in class
- Class 'wellbeing check-ins'/Zones of regulation where children can identify if they need to talk
- Scarf/Spirals mental health teaching programmes
- Circle times

Whole school

- Mental health and Wellbeing week – whole school focus on doing things which make us feel good
- Mental Health and Wellbeing assemblies
- Displays and information around the school about positive mental health and where to go for help and support
- Wellbeing area in each classroom developed to support the emotional health and wellbeing of a child.

Small group activities

- Nurture club (Tuesday and Thursday lunchtime)
- Wellbeing support groups -Elsa
- Spirals– a small group intervention to improve children's communication skills around turn taking, dealing with issues, resolving conflict

Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing

Through Our SCARF PSHE programme, we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help children to be more resilient, understand about mental health and be less affected by the stigma of mental health problems.

Identifying, referring and supporting children with mental health needs

Some children experience a range of emotional and behavioural problems that are outside the normal range for their age or gender. These children could be described as experiencing mental health problems or disorders.

Our approach:

- Provide a safe environment to enable children to express themselves and be listened to.
- Ensure the welfare and safety of children are paramount.
- Identify appropriate support for children based on their needs.
- Involve parents and carers when their child needs support.
- Involve children in the care and support they have.
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with children and keep parents and carers updated.

Early Identification

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things from getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- Analysing behaviour, exclusions, attendance and sanctions.
- Staff report concerns about individual children to the relevant lead persons.
- Pupil Progress Review meetings termly
- Regular meetings for staff to raise concerns.
- A parental information and health questionnaire on entry to the school.
- Gathering information from a previous school at transfer.
- Parental meetings and home visits in EYFS.
- Enabling children to raise concerns to any member of staff.
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns to any member of staff. Signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health problems - any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to our Mental Health Lead or the SENDCO.

These signs might include:

- Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits.
- Falling academic achievement.
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide.
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope.
- Secretive behaviour.
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism.
- Not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE.
 - Wearing long sleeves in hot weather.
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.

Staff are aware that mental health needs, such as anxiety, might appear as non-compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development. If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the school's child protection procedures are followed. If there is a medical emergency then the school's procedures for medical emergencies are followed.

Disclosures by children and confidentiality

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive, and non-judgmental to children who disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of our children is paramount and staff listen rather than advise. Staff make it clear to children that the concern will be shared with the Mental Health Lead or the Safeguarding Lead and recorded, in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil. All disclosures are recorded and held on CPOMS, including date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and action to be taken.

Support for Friends

We recognise that when a pupil is experiencing mental health problems it can be challenging for their friends, who often want to help them but are not sure the best thing to do and can also be emotionally affected. In the case of eating disorders and self-harm, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping strategies from each other, and we will consider on a case by case basis what support might be appropriate including one to one and group support. We will involve the pupil who is suffering and their parents and consider what is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told, how they can best support, things they should avoid doing/saying which may inadvertently cause upset and warning signs that their friend needs help. We will also make information available about where and how to access information and support for themselves and healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling.

Working with specialist services to get swift access to the right specialist support and treatment

In some cases a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, self-harm and eating disorders. We have access to a range of specialist services and during the support will have regular contact with the service to review the support and consider next steps. School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the Mental Health Lead following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents and carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the pupil and parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs. Our main specialist service is CAMHS.

SEND and mental health

Persistent mental health problems may lead to children having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age. In some cases, the child may benefit from being identified as having a special educational need (SEN). Children with a mental health illness or emotional needs may

be placed on the SEND register under the code of SEMH (social, emotional and mental health) as their primary need.

Involving parents and carers

Promoting mental health

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular, supporting children who do have mental health needs. On first entry to the school, our parent's meeting includes a discussion on the importance of positive mental health for learning. We ask parents to inform us of any mental health needs their child has and any issues that they think might have an impact on their child's mental health and wellbeing, based on a list of risk factors pertaining to the child or family. It is very helpful if parents and carers can share information with the school so that we can better support their child from the outset. All information will be treated in confidence.

Supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs

We are aware that parents and carers react in different ways to knowing their child has a mental health problem and we will be sensitive and supportive. We also aim to reassure by explaining that mental health problems are common, that the school has experience of working with similar issues and that help and advice are available. When a concern has been raised, the school will:

- Contact parents and carers and meet with them (In almost all cases, parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as where child protection issues are identified.)
- Offer information to take away and signpost to places to seek further information, advice and support
- Be available for follow up calls.
- Make a record of the meeting on CPOMS.
- Discuss how the parents and carers can support their child.
- Keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions provided.

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger and children may choose to tell their parents and carers themselves. We give children the option of informing their parents and carers about their mental health needs for themselves or of accompanying and supporting them to do so. We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Our primary concern is the children, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

Supporting and training staff

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identify mental health needs early in children and know what to do and where to get help.

Our Senior Mental Health Lead has a Certificate.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing.

Where to get information and support

Signposting

We ensure that staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services. Within the school (noticeboards, posters, display boards etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, website), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure staff, parents and pupils understand:

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

For support on specific mental health needs

Anxiety UK www.anxietyuk.org.uk

OCD UK www.ocduk.org

Depression Alliance www.depressoinalliance.org

Eating Disorders www.b-eat.co.uk and www.inourhands.com

National Self-Harm Network www.nshn.co.uk www.selfharm.co.uk

Suicidal thoughts Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS:
www.papyrus-uk.org

For general information and support

www.mind.org.uk advice and support on mental health problems

www.time-to-change.org.uk tackles the stigma of mental health

www.rethink.org challenges attitudes towards mental health

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk> champions young people's mental health and wellbeing

<https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/young-people>

<https://parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk/>

Bereavement:

- SeeSaw [SeeSaw | Grief support for children and young people in Oxfordshire](#)

- Winston's Wish [Winston's Wish - giving hope to grieving children \(winstonswish.org\)](http://winstonswish.org)

- Hope [HOPE Bereavement Support](#)

- Cruise bereavement support - [Cruse Bereavement Support - Oxford – Oxfordshire](#)

Children who are young carers

The Oxfordshire NHS website discusses support for Young Carers -

[Young carers - Caring for our carers Caring for our carers \(oxfordhealth.nhs.uk\)](#)

[Family Information Service | Young Carers Team - Family Solutions Service \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](#)

Be Free YC - Supporting Young Carers in Oxfordshire

Young Carers - Carers Oxfordshire