Mile Cross Primary School

Positive Mental Health

and

Emotional Well-being Policy

Policy 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 Mile Cross Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health for all of our children and staff. We pursue this aim using a model which encompasses universal, whole school approaches, school-based interventions and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at more vulnerable children.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for children affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health.

Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Medical Policy in cases where a child's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue, our Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy where a child has an identified

special educational need and/or disability, our Safeguarding Policy where a child is identified as being at immediate risk of harm and our Anti-Bulling Policy.

This Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all children and staff
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with children with mental health issues
- Provide early intervention and support to children suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of children, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Stuart Allen – Head Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Toby Whalen – Deputy Head and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Eileen Maceachern - SENCO and mental health lead
- Elizabeth Earnshaw – Parent Support Advisor (PSA)
- Ruth Pomeroy - Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA)
- Alli Hall - Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA), Domestic Abuse Change Champion and bereavement support assistant.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or emotional wellbeing of a child should speak to the mental health lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the child is in danger of immediate harm then normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated safeguarding lead or alternative safeguarding leads Nich Starling, Emily Jordan, Alie Wright or Eileen Maceachern If the child presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed.

Individual Care Plans

For children with a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health, an Individual Health Care Plan will be created in line with our Medical Policy. This could include:

- Details of a child's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our children to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are covered regularly as part of whole school assemblies and are included as part of our developmental PSCHE curriculum.

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

The school places a strong emphasis on developing protective factors such as:

- Encouraging participation in sports and physical activities.
- Building self-esteem through systems of positive rewards and praise and by creating an ethos which shows all children they are valued.
- Fostering a sense of belonging to a community through class 'cafés', and whole school events.
- Building resilience through the development of a growth mindset culture where making mistakes is valued.
- Organising 'Playground Friends' to support relationships at playtimes.

School-Based Interventions

Children identified by themselves, by peers by staff or by parents as being in need of support beyond universal, whole-school provision, may receive additional help from their class or year group staff team through 1:1 or group sessions. Children in need of more specialist support could be referred for a short programme of sessions delivered by one of the school's ELSAs (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants), Ruth Pomeroy and Alli Hall. Children may also receive in-school support from the PSA (Parent Support Advisor), Liz Earnshaw.

External Agencies

For some children, referrals will be made directly to external agencies with specialist expertise. Where a referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or Point 1 is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Eileen Maceachern, Elizabeth Earnshaw or other staff members following discussion. The school will work in partnership with specialist health services to ensure children receive appropriate support within and outside school.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, children and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community by highlighting relevant sources of support within school, in our newsletter and on our website.

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a child 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 Toby Whalen or Eileen Maceachern in person and via CPOMS (our Children Protection Online Monitoring System).

Possible warning signs include (but are not limited to):

- 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
- Age inappropriate talk about drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Trying to avoid PE or getting changed secretively
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Managing disclosures

All staff will be trained to respond appropriately to disclosures from a child about issues regarding their own mental health or that of a friend.

Staff responses in the first instance will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental, focused on listening and supporting rather than advising and exploring causes.

All disclosures will be recorded on CPOMS and include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation

Support and advice about next steps will be actioned through CPOMS and communicated in person when required.

Confidentiality

Issues of confidentiality will be dealt with in line with the school's Confidentiality Policy.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, safeguarding procedures must be followed.

Working with Parents/Carers

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, the school is sensitive in its approach and staff will make arrangements to discuss issues in face-to-face meetings whenever possible.

Meetings will agree next steps for provision appropriate to need, provide clear pathways for further support and ensure that parents/carers as well as children know who to contact within the school for advice or clarification. A brief record of the meeting will be kept on CPOMS.

Wider Partnership with All Parents/Carers

In order to support parents and work in partnership we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website and in the school atrium.
- 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.
- Continue to employ a Parent Support Advisor (PSA) to work alongside families who have requested support.
- Keep parents informed, through the website, about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSCHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

We recognise that some parents/carers may have their own difficulties with poor mental health and mental illness. Staff will be understanding of issues which may arise from this, maintain confidentiality when issues are disclosed and signpost support through our PSA.

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.

Staff will be kept updated about relevant local and national developments through weekly staff briefings and teacher meetings.

All staff will be able to access materials through the SEND ‘Information Station’ located in the staffroom which provides information and further sources of support.

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 to developing situations with one or more children.

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

The mental health lead and PSA will attend regular training to maintain and update knowledge and remain aware of local provision.

Support for Staff

At Mile Cross Primary we take our responsibility to protect the mental health of all staff employed within the school seriously and strive to promote positive well being within our school community.

An active Well-being team organises regular events and activities to promote a sense of community.

All staff are encouraged to maintain a good work/life balance.

As a school we understand that there are times when staff may need additional support to protect their mental health and emotional well being. If members of staff feel that their capacity to do their job is affected, or if they have similar concerns relating to a colleague, these should be communicated to Toby Whalen or Stuart Allen.

The school subscribes to the Norfolk Support Line Service. The Helpline number is displayed in the Staffroom.

Counselling sessions with a clinical psychologist are available to all staff upon request.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in May 2020.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have any questions these should be addressed to Toby Whalen, Eileen Maceachern or the governor with responsibility for Mental Health and Emotional Well Being, Nadine Palmer.

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