



**HIGHLEES
PRIMARY SCHOOL**
Bringing out the Best

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

DATE	DETAILS	BY WHOM
April 2023	Approved and Adopted	Senior Mental Health Lead & Principal
April 2024	Revision (subject to any required statutory updates)	Principal and Whole School Staff

Our School Values

Highlee's values form the basis of our Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy. Our curriculum is designed to support these values and encourage children to show them, both in and outside of school.



Within our school we promote the 5 ways of wellbeing. These are;

- Keep active
- Take notice
- Connect
- Keep learning
- Give

Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and children.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in children.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to children with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst children and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Instil a culture of staff and children's welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

Key Staff Members

Mental Health Lead: Sharon Edwards
Mental Health First Aiders: Heather Hemsworth
SENDCO: Sue Hallam
Designated Safeguarding Lead: Melissa Albert
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads: Victoria Cadman, Maja Celebicanin, Sue Hallam and Sharon Edwards

Mental Health and Wellbeing at Highlees

At Highlees Primary School, 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 '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 both 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.

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our children need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum (see specific documentation).

Additionally, we will deliver specific sessions to provide children who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting children to support any of their friends who are facing challenges.

Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a child is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs will always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs will alert the Safeguarding Team.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of include:

- 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;

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

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child, in the first instance they should speak to the Child Protection Team. If there is a concern that the child is at high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's safeguarding procedures should be followed. If a child presents a high- risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

Targeted Support at school

Targeted support is available for children identified as being vulnerable to mental health issues. We ensure timely and effective identification of children who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Identifying children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems;
- Working with Children's Services, CAMHS and other agencies services to follow protocols including assessment and referral;
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers;
- Agreeing an Individual Care Plan;
- Providing a range of interventions;
- Provide children with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns;
- Provide children with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it;

Children who are going through difficulties such as family illness, separation, bereavement, or other stressful situations will be supported with small group work (e.g. gardening, cooking, games). In-school support may be delivered by our SEND teams or through specialist groups. This support may include:

- Circle time approaches or 'circle of friends' activities.
- Targeted use of JIGSAW PSHE resources;

- Managing feelings resources e.g. ‘worry boxes’ and ‘worry eaters’;
- Managing emotions resources such as ‘the incredible 5 point scale’;
- Primary Group Work/Mental health and wellbeing groups or ELSA support groups;
- Therapeutic activities including art, lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques;

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

- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire
- The Boxall Profile

Signposting

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

Individual Care Plans

When a child has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, an Individual Care Plan will be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals.

This plan should include:

- Details of the child’s situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- The role of the school and specific staff

Managing Disclosures

If a child chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. All disclosures will be recorded confidentially on My Concern

Confidentiality

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a child to either someone within or outside of the school, then this will be first discussed with the child. It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. Safeguarding supervision between the team relieves the burden of concerns and also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur. It also provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Parents would be informed if concerns are raised about a child's mental health. If a child gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, child protection procedures should be followed.

Training Staff

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 to enable them to keep pupils safe. We have a trained Mental Health First Aider.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge in the areas of Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due developing situations.

Working with Parents & Carers

We are mindful that for a parent/carer, hearing concerns about their child can be upsetting and distressing. We will always allow time for parents/carers to reflect and process the situation. Signposting parents to other sources of information and support is also helpful in these instances. Lines of communication will be kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. A record of the meeting and points discussed/agreed will be added to My Concern and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate.

We do recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing. In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website;
- 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
- Behaviour support (Such as JOGO)
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Therapists

Supporting Peers

When a child is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends, who may want to support but do not know how.

To keep peers safe, we will consider (on a case by case basis) which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the child who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told;
- How friends can best support;
- Things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset;
- Warning signs that their friend needs help .

Additionally, we will highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves;
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition;
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

Staff Mental Health

We recognise that anyone can experience mental health issues for various reasons which may be out of their control. There may also be work related factors that could contribute to poor mental health such as work life imbalance, workload pressure, etc. To every extent possible, we aim to recognise and address issues that contribute to mental health issues.

We will:

- Treat staff mental illness seriously;
- Proactively support resolution of issues causing concern;
- Support staff members who face mental health problems;
- Create pleasant workplaces;
- Make emotional wellbeing an ongoing discussion point and focus of the school;
- Encourage communication.

Should staff need support, The Elliot Foundation Academy Trust provides an Employee Assistance Program free of charge for all staff members. Details of this service are displayed around the school on both sites. Staff are also encouraged to discuss issues with their peers and the senior leadership team.