



SMARDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

'Enjoying, Learning and Achieving Together'

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Reviewed by Governors	January 2022
Due for Review	January 2025

Smarden Primary School Statement of Mental Health and Pastoral Intent

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).

At our school, we are passionate about making a difference to the lives of our community and aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupils. There is good evidence to support the association between good mental health and education engagement and academic achievement. We believe that good mental health is the most important prerequisite for pupils to fulfil their potential.

We want our curriculum to enable all pupils to become resilient, independent, curious and creative leaders who think for themselves. We plan a broad, enriching and challenging creative curriculum, which uses authentic experiences and project based learning to put pupils in charge of their learning. Pupils' voice is central to our approach and ensuring their positive mental health is our greatest priority.

Our curriculum aims to enable all pupils to pursue their future ambitions and goals and go on to lead happy and successful lives.

The starting point for learning is a positive ethos and climate of respect and trust based upon shared values across the school community, including amongst parents, pupils and staff. Consequently, the development of staff to support their own well-being and that of pupils is of fundamental importance.

According to our pupils, mental health at Smarden is about keeping children safe; thinking positively; making friends; enjoying learning and healthy competition; feeling good about ourselves and proud of our learning; feeling challenged but confident; spending time outdoors; hands on learning; trips and getting muddy.

Our mental health and well-being policy centres on supporting children to manage and overcome anxiety; to take risks; not to miss opportunities due to a fear of failure; to develop resilience; cope with setbacks; get out of their seats and to think for themselves; to question, speak up; lead; to have positive relationships, and to take comfort and joy from their beautiful surroundings. These areas are important at Smarden because many of our children are well-behaved, but are passive, risk averse and fear getting things 'wrong'.

We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to ill mental health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

Scope of this policy

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 Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions policy in cases where a pupil's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The Policy Aims 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 of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents or carers

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Mrs Miller - Mental Health Lead, Designated Safeguarding Lead & SENCO
- Mrs Taylor - Deputy Designated Safeguard Lead
- Mrs Taylor – Pupil Wellbeing Champion
- Mrs Emma Leech – Staff Wellbeing Champion
- Mrs Kim Marsh - Wellbeing Governor

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 danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated child protection officer, the Head Teacher or the designated governor. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CYPMHS) is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Mrs Miller. Guidance about referring to CYPMHS can be found [here](#).

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil'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 pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum.

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

We will follow the PSHE Association [Guidance](#) to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. The support available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined in Appendix B.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as common rooms and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking by ensuring pupils understand:

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

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs that indicate a pupil 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 immediately communicate their concerns on CPOMS and with Mrs Miller or Mrs Taylor.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or 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
- Skipping 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

Managing disclosures

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

If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?' For more information about how to handle mental health disclosures sensitively please refer to the school's Safeguarding Policy.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing on CPOMS and held on the pupil's confidential file. This record will include:

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

This information should be shared with the Mental Health Lead who will offer support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regard to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on, then we should discuss with the pupil:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a pupil without consulting or informing parents first. Ideally we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations (e.g. where a pupil is at serious risk of harm) when information must always be shared with others. Safeguarding always takes priority and the school will always act within the interests of the child with or without parents' permission.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the mental health lead, Mrs Miller. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence; and it provides an

extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents must always be kept informed and contacted at the earliest convenience.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues or safeguarding concerns, parents should not be informed, but a Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mrs Miller, Mrs Taylor & Mrs Speight) must be informed immediately.

Working with Parents / Carers

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents / carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil and other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We should highlight further sources of information and give the parents / carers leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too, e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider immediately booking in a follow-up meeting or phone call, as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Each meeting should end with agreed next steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

Working with All Parents / Carers

Parents / carers are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go 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
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- 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.

Support for Pupils

- All pupils will be able to access a range of support within the school. Mrs Taylor is available to provide pastoral care as well as the pupil's class teacher.
- Each classroom has a Worry Box for pupils to communicate with the teacher. PHSE lessons support the teaching of wellbeing and mental health as well as Assemblies, which are used to reinforce positive messages.
- Staff can refer pupils to Haven and pupils can ask to attend. Haven is a lunch club, which provides a quiet space and allows staff time to listen to pupil's concerns and worries.
- Pupils requiring more intensive support can be referred to a Clinical Psychologist via Mrs Miller (SENCO & Mental Health Lead). This will be considered at a Tier 2 level.
- Pupils who need further professional and medical support will be referred to CYPMHS via GP. This is usually considered to be at Tier 3 level.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child

Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the pupil 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 or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend may need help (e.g. signs of relapse)
- Additionally, we will want to 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

Examples of good practice may include:

- organising whole-school or year group assemblies to discuss specific mental health and wellbeing issues
- arranging for external speakers to visit and discuss topical issues such as the use of social media or the impact of body image
- using key dates such as Mental Health Awareness Week and World Mental Health Day as opportunities to raise the profile of mental health
- holding designated health and wellbeing days, organising activities across the curriculum
- dedicating time to celebrate pupils' academic and extracurricular achievements
- including pupil wellbeing in lesson observation criteria for teaching staff

- running yoga after school club or mindfulness sessions to prepare pupils for a relaxed day
- using displays and bulletins to signpost pupils to sources of support
- organising a tutor programme so that pupils have regular opportunities to discuss mental health issues in small groups.

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 to enable them to keep pupils safe. We will host relevant information on our virtual learning environment for staff who wish to learn more about mental health.

The [MindEd learning portal](#) provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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 developing situations with one or more pupils.

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

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with Mrs Miller, the Head teacher as our CPD Coordinator, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

[The Charlie Waller Memorial Trust](#) provides funded training to schools on a variety of topics related to mental health including twilight, half day and full day INSET sessions.

Related policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with policies for:

- Anti-bullying
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Online safety
- Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education.
- Attendance Policy
- Staff Wellbeing

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in January 2025.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to

Mrs Miller our Mental Health Lead via. This policy will always be updated to reflect personnel changes.

Appendix A

What Inclusion and Effective Mental Health Interventions Means To Us

- The child stays at the centre of every conversation.
- We prioritise those who need our help most, but we intervene with all.
- When young people are here, we can support and educate them – attendance matters.
- We all learn best when there are clear rules and simple consequences.
- We use evidence-based practice for all our interventions.

SAFEGUARDING

- Safeguarding pupils comes above everything else we do.
- All staff across the school have training annually with reminders throughout the year at briefings, staff meetings and inset days.
- All new staff have safeguarding training as part of their induction.
- All staff at the school recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, that they should have read and understood section one of Keeping Young people Safe in Education 2021, that early intervention is key and that context matters.
- All notes are kept securely.
- The Senior Mental Health lead is training to be an expert in this field supported by pupil and staff well-being champions.

ATTENDANCE

- All staff have a role to play in ensuring each child attends school.
- Mentors support by providing first wave support, checking in with pupils who have poor or low attendance.
- All of the Inclusion Team work to remove barriers to good school attendance.
- We work together with external agencies to address and remove barriers to school attendance.
- We prioritise pupils who are classed as disadvantaged, SEMH or SEN, however, we are passionate about providing the same support to all pupils, irrespective of background.
- We follow the protocols which are in place, acknowledging that each child and situation is different and adjusting as required.

BEHAVIOUR

- Good behaviour allows for teachers to teach and pupils to learn.
- We have a moral obligation to prepare young people for the rigours of work and life beyond education.
- We are here to educate the whole child, helping with their moral and personal development.
- We apply the protocols for each pupil, acknowledging that each child and situation is different and adjusting as required.
- We prioritise pupils who are classed as disadvantaged, SEMH or SEN, however, we are passionate about providing the same support to all pupils, irrespective of background.
- We make reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs or vulnerable pupils.
- We have a support-based system; after each punishment comes a level of support.
- We involve parents in supporting their child to improve their behaviour.

PASTORAL CARE/MENTAL HEALTH

- Pastoral support is driven by our moral purpose (see previous page).
- We do not give up on pupils and constantly look for ways to support them.
- Our interventions are directed by evidence-based practice.
- Our leaders are passionate about becoming experts in their field around pastoral and mental health support.
- We work with numerous external agencies to support our pupils.
- We recognise that early intervention is vital.
- We involve parents as appropriate in the support which we put in place.
- Our interventions are assessed and evaluated using entry and exit questionnaires.
- The mental health of our pupils and staff is of the highest priority.

Our Inclusion Intent statement places high value on excellent school practice and research evidence to inform the overarching principles above.

Appendix B

Useful links

- [Young Minds](#) is one of the UK's leading charities for children and young people's mental health.
- [Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families](#)- is a charity dedicated to providing training & support for child mental health services
- [Place2Be](#) is one of the UK's leading children's mental health charities.
- [Mind](#) is the UK's leading mental health charity, offering a great deal of useful information on children's mental health.
- [Kent County Council](#) - KCC has a range of resources on a number of topics relating to Mental Health and wellbeing
- [Mentally Healthy Schools](#)- Quality – assured information, advice and resources to help primary schools understand and promote children's mental health and wellbeing
- [Child and young people's mental health services \(CYPMHS\)](#) provide support to children and young people with a wide range of behavioural and emotional issues.