

# Mental Health Policy



**Introduction:**

This policy is a guide for all staff (including Governors) at Ranelagh Primary School and its approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies including the Safeguarding and PSHCE policies.

**Aims**

- 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 through the school's 5Rs.
- Establish 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**

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of students, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

Head Teacher- Mrs S Lawrenson

Mental Health Lead & Designated Safeguarding Lead – Ms S Patel

Wellbeing Lead - Miss Welburn

SENCO & Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mrs T Chowdhury

Mental Health First Aiders – Ms S Patel and Miss S Tessier

PSHCE Lead – Mrs Zaman

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 Safeguarding Team. If there is a concern that the child is at high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed. If the child presents a high risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

**Individual Care or Behaviour Support 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, it is recommended that an Individual Care or Behaviour Support Plan should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals including the School Nurse.

**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 and using a common framework of language from the Zones of Regulation displayed in each classroom. Additionally, we will use such lessons to provide children who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe.

### **Signposting**

We will ensure that staff, children and parents/carers are supported. For staff this may be during staff bulletins, emails, meetings, training and posters in the staff and PPA rooms. For our pupils this will be through the school newsletter, posters around the school and website, as well as during Circle times and the Curriculum. We will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

### **Support at School**

Nurture support is available for children identified as being vulnerable to mental health issues. Children who are going through difficulties such as family illness, separation, bereavement, or other stressful situations are supported with small group work (e.g. social skills, personal development groups) with our Inclusion team.

### **Warning Signs**

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 speak to the Mental Health lead or a member of 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
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Attendance concerns

*This list is by no means exhaustive.*

### **Targeted Support**

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

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 or Support Plan
- Providing a range of targeted interventions
- Provide children with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it.

### **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 Safeguard Software and the DSL notified.

Parents will be informed if concerns are raised about a child's mental health. However if a child gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection procedures should be followed.

We are mindful that for a parent, hearing concerns about their child can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and process the situation. Signposting parents to other sources of information and support can be 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 are added Safeguard Software and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate.

### **Supporting and working with the Parents and Community**

We recognise the family and the community plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of and have access to promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems;
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.);
- Offering support to help parents /carers and community to develop their parenting skills eg TripleP, CAHMS parents workshops
- Providing specific and targeted support for carers around Mental Health - this can be based on the family's background eg support around developmental trauma
- Keep the stakeholders informed of any national events e.g. Children's Mental Health week to raise awareness and remove the stigma around mental health.
- Make the Mental Health Policy easily accessible to all stakeholders.
- In some instances, parents/ carers may be referred (with their consent) to social services for support.

### **Training**

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. A member of staff (Inclusion Manager) is also a trained Mental Health First Aider.

### **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, poor working conditions. To every extent possible, we aim to recognise and address cases of workplace pressures that contribute to mental health issues.

We aim to:

- Treat staff mental illness seriously.
- Proactively support resolution of issues causing concern.
- Support staff members who face mental health problems.
- Create pleasant workplaces
- Continue to review workload

### **Further links**

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

A public health England and NHS site to help people take simple steps to look after their mental health, improve their mental wellbeing and support others.

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

Quality-assured information, advice and resources to help primary schools understand and promote children's mental health and wellbeing.

This policy will be reviewed in line with the policy cycle.