

Policy for: Mental Health and Wellbeing

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Signed by Chair of Governors:



Policy Statement:

At Newdigate Primary School and Nursery, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all children, staff and connected family members within our school community.

We have a nurturing and supportive ethos which supports our school motto – ‘Every Child Deserves the Best’. We recognise the importance of extending this care and support to all children and adults linked to our school.

At Newdigate, we recognise that everybody experiences challenges which can make them vulnerable and in need of help. We recognise that the need for emotional support can come to anybody, at any time. We see the task of ensuring positive mental health as something that everybody within our school community can support and play a part in.

Our school intends to develop a working party in which various members of the school community can work together to support Mental Health and Wellbeing. This group will work together with three main objectives:

1. To be aware of the needs of children, staff and families and understand the situations and events which are impacting on mental health individually and across larger groups.
2. To devise solutions and actions to support and nurture positive mental health and wellbeing.
3. To raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing across the whole school community, including within family situations.

Links to other policies:

This policy should be read and considered in conjunction with our Medical, Behaviour, SEND, Anti-Bullying, PSHE and SMSC policies due to links with Mental Health within all of these categories.

Concerns for mental health and wellbeing of staff, children and family members will also follow the same procedures defined within the school’s Safeguarding Policy, utilising the training of all Designated Safeguarding Leads when required.

Key Staff Members:

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health within our school community, staff with a specific remit towards whole school wellbeing include:

Katie Lawrence – Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead

Laura Kelly – Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader, Family Learning Mentor, Designated Safeguarding Lead

Geraldine Marshall – Head Teacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead

Kerry Wright – Deputy Head Teacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead

Rebecca Grove – Assistant Head Teacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead

Stefanie Tolley – SENDco, Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Linda Hutchinson – PSHE Co-ordinator.

Members of the Mental Health Working Party:

Katie Lawrence
Laura Kelly
Kerry Wright
Carly White
Francesca De Miranda
Amy Turner
Ann Benn
Emma Chadaway

Intentions within Curriculum:

The skills, knowledge and understanding required by our children to keep themselves emotionally healthy and safe will be included within our PSHE curriculum. Regular PSHE sessions will be built into the curriculum alongside whole-day events to raise morale and awareness of mental wellbeing. These events can be planned as activities which can be done in school, at home and with parents being invited into classroom to work alongside their children.

Targeted Support for Children in School:

The school will assess the mental health needs of all children regularly. These assessments can be done informally on a daily basis by anyone within the school who builds on-going relationships with the children in class. Any children who are showing causes for concern will be supported using various strategies, referring to Designated Safeguarding Leads if required. A more formal assessment of mental health and wellbeing will be requested at the end of each half term as a wellbeing tracker grid.

Wellbeing Trackers – Identifying Early Warning Signs

All staff will complete termly wellbeing trackers on their pupils aimed at identifying a range of possible difficulties including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

N.B. - These are colour coded to aid identification.

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental distress over a longer period of time. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the designated child protection and safeguarding officer or the emotional wellbeing lead as appropriate.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

The school will offer support to children through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of children if appropriate. These approaches will include:

- Group chats i.e. Nurture, Boomerang style adult-led discussions.
- Therapeutic approaches i.e. Draw for Talk, Lego play, mindfulness, art etc.
- Use of SEAL resources.
- Use of Protective Behaviours resources.
- Use of worry boxes / worry eaters / worry monsters.
- Outside counselling agencies and therapists.
- School nurses
- Education psychology services
- CAMHs
- Family support workers

N.B. Parents should be made aware of any concerns for children's mental wellbeing at the earliest possible point. Support of children's mental health should be a team effort, with close communication between school and parents.

Supporting Staff Well-Being:

At Newdigate, the wellbeing of all staff is considered with the utmost importance. It is the duty of all members of staff to be aware and respectful of the mental health and wellbeing of themselves and others. To this end, the following expectations have been set out for all staff to follow.

The Headteacher and the school's senior leaders will:

- Promote and model good management behaviours to prevent and reduce staff stress and establish a positive work ethos within the school, supporting staff to maintain a reasonable work/life balance whilst still meeting the standards required of their roles.
- Promote effective communication and ensure that there are procedures in place for consulting and supporting staff on any changes in the school, to management structures and working arrangements at both a school wide and departmental / year group level.
- Regularly check-ins with team members, thanking and encouraging them and offering praise when it is due.
- Attend training as appropriate in order to increase their awareness of the causes and effects of work-related stress.
- Encourage their staff to participate in activities undertaken by the school to promote wellbeing, heighten staff morale and more effective working.
- Develop regular opportunities for staff to voice concerns i.e. feedback boxes, surveys and respond appropriately to any feedback.
- Hold return to work meetings for those returning from mental health absences, similarly to those who have been absent for physical illness. Use these meetings to find out how the member of staff can be further supported.
- Continually monitor patterns in regard to; sickness/absence, staff turnover, staff changes, staff covering other members of staff, counselling or occupational health referrals, numbers of grievance and harassment cases.

Middle Leaders and Subject Leaders will:

- Treat individuals reporting to them with consideration and promote a culture of mutual respect in the teams or subjects they manage.
- Communicate well with those that they are leading and be available as a person to which people can report any concerns and grievances, aiming to support effective solutions.
- Quickly and effectively deal with unacceptable behaviour and take decisive action when issues are brought to their attention.
- Ensure workload is distributed equitably and fairly among their team and that when work is delegated, team members have the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver it, providing reasonable support where needed.

- Regularly check in with team members, thank and encourage them and offer praise when it is due.
- Attend training as appropriate in order to increase their awareness of the causes and effects of work-related stress.
- Ensure that monitoring is necessary, supportive and any requests for monitoring are given sufficient time.

All Staff will:

- Treat colleagues and others they interact with during the course of their work with fairness, consideration and respect.
- Co-operate with the school's efforts to implement the Staff Wellbeing Policy, attending briefings and raising their own awareness of the causes and effects of stress and poor wellbeing.
- Raise concerns with their line manager if they feel there are work issues that are causing them or others stress and having a negative impact on their wellbeing.
- Be responsible for their own health and wellbeing as far as is practically possible.
- Take ownership of setting out their own development plan and discussing this as appropriate with their line manager, as one of the means to enable them to work effectively in their team and reduce the risk of stress.
- Take responsibility for working effectively in their assigned roles, supporting others as appropriate and helping to avoid causing stress to their colleagues.

Supporting Mental Health in the Wider School Community:

The Family Learning Mentor, Laura Kelly, will be utilised to support families with concerns for mental health and wellbeing, with Designated Safeguarding Leads supporting her within this role. Mrs Kelly will be supported in this role by other Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Considerations will be made as to how we can best support individual situations as a school and where it is not possible for the school to directly meet their needs, relevant and appropriate outside agencies will be contacted either through the school or through signposting provided to the family.

Parents will be made aware of all mental health and wellbeing initiatives running within school via a regular wellbeing newsletter which can be used to support positive well-being discussions at home. The Mental Health Working Party will arrange resources/initiatives to be sent home which will support families in supporting their children through mental health difficulties, additionally encouraging families to make mental health and wellbeing discussions a priority within their homes.

Signposting:

Access to a range of mental health and wellbeing support agencies will be made readily available for all children, staff and families to access when required, including signposting to support for housing and financial concerns. This will be come alongside other resources to recognise early warning signs and signs to prevent reaching crisis.

Relevant support agencies for signposting:

- Relate - in school counsellor
- MIND - Mental Health Support
- IAPT
- Samaritans
- Young Minds – for parents worried about the mental health of their child.
- 999 for an ambulance or straight to A&E for extreme self-harm incidents
- Family Information Service Helpline
- Family Support Workers
- RISE - Crisis Team
- PMHT - 1:1 consultation

- Virtual Training – (through the RISE website)
- Guy's Gift - Bereavement for whole family
- Winston's Wish – Bereavement Support
- Life Church Bedworth – Food Bank
- Together Housing - Housing Support
- P3 - Housing Support.
- Refuge - Domestic Abuse Support
- Dimensions Tool Kits – (through CWmind website)
- GP services
- SEMH - action plans within school