

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
Stanley Grove Primary and Nursery School

June 2021



This document is a statement of the aims, principles and procedures regarding Mental Health and Wellbeing at Stanley Grove Primary and Nursery School.

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)

Aims

At Stanley Grove, we aim to promote positive mental health for all members of the school community, including; staff, pupils, parents and carers. In addition, this links to our whole school ethos where we aim to provide our children with the knowledge and skills for the exciting and important jobs of the future and make sure that they leave Stanley Grove prepared to face our challenging world.

We aim to support mental health through a whole school approach and atmosphere as well as provide bespoke support for more vulnerable pupils. The school aims to recognise and respond to mental health for all. This may be through supporting their own mental health issues or helping them if those around them are suffering from mental health issues.

We aim to remove the stigma around mental health to create a safe and stable environment where both adults and children feel safe to talk about their mental health and seek support.

It is also important that the school actively develops protective factors in order to help pupils build resilience to and help them manage mental health issues. This will be done through ensuring all pupils feel valued; making sure school is a positive and safe environment, allowing children the opportunity to speak openly with trusted adults, promoting positive mental health and wellbeing and having zero tolerance to bullying.

Purpose of the policy

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing for all members of the school community
- Increase understanding and awareness of mental health issues
- Help staff understand how to identify and support mental health issues
- Provide support to staff, pupils, and their families

Links to other policies

This policy links to the school's behaviour policy and Inclusion policy, it is important to be aware that changes in behaviour can be related to mental health needs. In addition, it is important that those with mental health problems have their needs met and are included in school life.

A whole school approach

A whole school approach is taken to promoting positive mental health. This is done through considering ways to support and improve staff mental health and wellbeing as well as children's. The Relationships and Health Education Scheme of work enables children to build the skills they need to be resilient and through applying these skills children can become happy, successful and help to prevent problems before they arrive.

For staff it is vital that mental health and wellbeing is seen as important and are aware of the support available to them. The stigma that is often associated with mental health can often prevent understanding and awareness of mental health issues and cause staff to be reluctant to talk about their own mental health. Therefore, we aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues and create a culture where mental health needs are treated equally to physical health needs.

Staff roles and responsibilities,

It is the responsibility of all member of staff to promote positive mental health and have an understanding of what mental health issues are and how to support those with mental health issues. Some individuals will need additional

support and it is important that staff are able to signpost people to the relevant support and have an understanding of early warning signs. This will help staff to be able to have early intervention so they can ensure individuals receive the appropriate help they need.

Increase understanding and awareness of mental health issues

In order for all staff to be able to promote and support positive mental health they will first need to have an understanding and awareness of what mental health is. Staff will be given appropriate CPD to improve their knowledge and understanding of different aspects of mental health. They will be provided with information about different aspects and given the knowledge of how to support and signpost those struggling with mental health issues. Staff will also be given an understanding of how to support and look after their own mental health and know what to do if they are struggling.

Identifying and supporting mental health issues

Relevant support for staff is displayed in communal areas so that they can access this themselves.

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate that an individual is experiencing mental health or wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff should always communicate their concerns to the appropriate members of staff through CPOMS.

- Possible warning signs 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
- 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

Prompting positive mental health of children

Schools have a key role in supporting and promoting positive mental health in children. We have a number of whole school strategies used to support children's mental health and wellbeing these include:

- Forest Schools
- Regular Reflection time
- Peaceful Problem solving and calming down training
- Assemblies
- Daily movement breaks
- Calm table
- Relationships and health education lessons

Children who require additional support can have individual or group activities designed to support their mental health. These usually take the form of interventions. Sometimes delivered by teachers, Learning Mentor or Support Staff. These can take the form of 'published' and 'tailor made interventions. The 'tailor' made interventions are created and delivered by the Learning Mentor.

- Published interventions
- Lego therapy
- Drawing and talking
- Beam anger management
- 5 point scale
- Zones of regulation
- Comic strip/social stories
- Time to talk
- My hidden chimp
- Wellbeing warrior
- Calm club
- Paul Stallard 'Think good, Feel good'
- First aid for feelings

Tailor made interventions- which are created and delivered by the Learning Mentor and include the following areas

- Emotional literacy
- Resilience
- Regulation
- Sensory
- Team building
- Inclusion
- Growth Mindset
- Friendships
- Positive behaviour using restorative approaches
- Bereavement
- Anxiety and worries
- Elsa interventions
- Self-esteem and self-confidence
- Nurture
- Mindfulness

Promoting positive mental health of staff

It is important to ensure that staff mental health is valued and supported properly in order for staff to be able to effectively support pupils. Stanley Grove aims to have a positive atmosphere for staff and uses a number of strategies to support staff mental health and wellbeing including:

- Mental health contacts and information available on display
- Staff meetings, training and CPD

Working with specialist services

In some instances, it may be necessary for external specialist to support the mental health of pupils or staff.

For staff: All staff will be encouraged to contact their GP for help and advice and can be signposted to the list of support services displayed in the staffroom or available from the mental health lead.

For children: School referrals to Future in Mind can be made by the SENDCO following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents and carers. CAMHS can be referred to by the SENDCO, GP or self-referral done by parents and Educational Psychologist referrals can be done through the SENDCO.

Working with parents and carers

Parents and carers have a vital role in supporting their children's mental health. Parents need to feel that they are able to speak to staff about any concerns about their child's mental health and the school has an open door policy to support this. The school aims to help parents and carers have a good understanding of what mental health is, any signs of mental health, how to seek support and how to promote positive mental health for themselves and their children.

Where it is deemed appropriate to contact parents or carers the approach will need to be considered carefully. A meeting should try to be arranged, preferably face to face, who is at the meeting needs to be considered carefully and aims of the meeting should be clear.

Future in Mind have also delivered training to parents.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The mental health and wellbeing policy is on the school website and hard copies are available to parents and carers from the school office. All mental health professionals are given a copy before they begin working with the school as well as external agencies involved in our mental health work.

The policy can be adapted and updated at any time to reflect changes with the school.

Reopening schools and supporting recovery post pandemic

During the pandemic many will have experienced anxiety, loss, bereavement and trauma in many different forms. As a result, when staff and pupils alike return to school and try to get to grips with the 'new normal' many will need additional mental health and wellbeing support. It is important that there is a clear system in place to support staff and pupils during times when their emotional wellbeing and mental health is lower.

Physical activity

To support children's mental health and wellbeing physical activity and exercise, outdoors where possible, should be prioritised. During activities children will be kept within consistent groups / bubbles and any equipment used must be cleaned thoroughly between groups.

Exercise in a range of formats can be seen to improve mental health and wellbeing. Activities such as the 1K, making break times and lessons active where pupils are able to be physically active while physically distancing from each other should be encouraged.

Pupil wellbeing and emotions

During the pandemic children may have struggled with a variety of emotional responses including, panic, stress, anxiety and low mood. It is important that on return to school children are given the opportunity to discuss these and are made aware that these feelings are normal responses to an abnormal situation. Each child will respond differently to the return to school and teachers need to be aware of these. For the majority the return to school will be a positive experience as it will allow them to have social interactions with peers and staff, which will benefit wellbeing. For those who find this difficult the adapted curriculum on return to school can support them with discussing feelings and emotions whilst also help to provide structure and routines. For those who continue to struggle after the initial return to school interventions and support can be looked in to and put in to place, considering what support would be most appropriate

Aims of the return to school

- Support the rebuilding of friendships and social skills.
- Provide routine and structure in a friendly and safe environment.
- Support pupils with the up to date social distancing guidance.
- Support emotional and wellbeing skills.