Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Named Mental Health Lead: Ruth Diksson

Policy developed in January 2023 by Mental Health Lead in consultation with Mental Health and Wellbeing Practitioner, SENDCo and DSL

Contents:

1. Importance of mental health and wellbeing

2. Purpose of the policy

3. Definition of mental health and wellbeing

4. Links to other policies

5. A whole school approach

6. Staff roles and responsibilities

7. Support for children

8. Support for parents/carer

9. Support for staff

10. Staff training

11. Further information

1. Importance of mental health and wellbeing

At Anson Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for all members of our school community. We recognise that mental health and emotional wellbeing are important in the same way as physical health, and that children's mental health plays a crucial role in their overall wellbeing and can significantly affect their learning and achievement.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice identifies Social, Emotional and Mental Health as one of the four areas of Special Educational Need and the Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their

pupils succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy".

We aim for our school to be a place where children experience a nurturing and supportive environment that encourages the development of high self-esteem and resilience. For some, school is a place of safety and respite from difficult home lives, offering positive role models and relationships and engendering a sense of belonging and community.

Our role is to ensure that children are able to navigate stressful periods and access appropriate support where necessary. We also have a responsibility to educate children about positive mental health, supporting them to build resilience in an environment where:

• All children are valued

• All children have a sense of belonging and feel safe

• Children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their wellbeing

• Positive mental health is promoted

• Bullying is not tolerated

• Children are supported in overcoming adversities

COVID-19

As of 2020, NHS data shows that 1 in 6 children aged 5-16 are likely to have a mental health problem, which has increased significantly since 2017 when the rate was 1 in 9 (https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2021-follow-up-to-the-2017-survey). Many children and families faced struggles during the pandemic and the potential long-term effects of this period are difficult to predict, rendering the careful monitoring of mental health and wellbeing more important than ever.

2. Purpose of the policy

This policy sets out:

● How we promote positive mental health

● How we prevent mental health problems

- How we identify and support children with mental health needs

- How we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent or address mental health problems

- How we support parents/carers with their children's and their own wellbeing

- Where parents, staff and children can get further advice and support

3. Definition of mental health and wellbeing

The World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing 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".

4. Links to other policies

This policy links to our policies on anti-bullying, behaviour, safeguarding and SEND.

5. A whole school approach to promoting positive mental health

Our whole school approach to promoting positive mental health encompasses eight aspects:

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience

2. Helping children to develop positive relationships, support each other and seek help when necessary

3. Encouraging children to be resilient learners

4. Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health and its importance

5. Early identification of children with mental health needs and putting support in place to meet their needs

6. Working effectively with parents and carers

7. Supporting and training staff to develop their skills, resilience and awareness of their own mental health

8. Delivering a PSHE curriculum that promotes positive mental health and wellbeing throughout the school

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues.

6. Staff roles and responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health and understand protective and risk factors for mental health. Staff should understand the risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as: physical illness, low academic attainment, family breakdown, death and loss, and bullying. They should also understand factors that protect children from adversity, such as positive relationships, communication skills, experience of success and attainment, and a sense of belonging (Mental Health and Behaviour in School DfE March 2018 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2)

Specific Responsibilities:

Mental Health Lead

- Works with the staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing

- Provides advice and support to staff and parents/carers

- Ensures information on relevant support services is easily accessible to the school community

- Gathers feedback from pupils and staff to monitor wellbeing and understand what further support could be put in place

- Organises training to ensure members of staff have the skills required to fulfil the responsibilities set out in this policy

Wellbeing and Mental Health Practitioner

- Provides advice and support to staff and parents/carers

- Meets regularly with children in need of intervention and support with mental health

- Monitors wellbeing of children of concern through regular sessions and consultation with parents/carers and relevant staff

- Communicates with Inclusion team and DSL about children's wellbeing and any changes to children's situations

- Is available to staff for support with mental health and wellbeing

- Organise parent events (coffee mornings etc)

PSHE Coordinator

- Oversees the teaching of the PSHE curriculum and ensures mental wellbeing is woven into teaching and learning across the curriculum

- Works with the staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing

Further sources of internal support include:

- SENDCo

- Designated Safeguarding Lead

- PSHE Coordinator

- School support staff employed to manage mental health needs of particular children

- Headteacher

Sources of external support include:

- Brent CAMHS

- W.E.S.T

- The Skills Network mentoring scheme

- BOAT

- Brent Family Wellbeing Centres

- CBT through EP service

- Early Help service

- Barnado's

- Brent Out of Hours Family Support Helpline

7. Supporting children's mental health

We believe the school has a key role in promoting positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems in children. We have developed a range of prevention strategies and approaches including:

- Peer mediation and peer mentoring

- Lunchtime mindfulness groups

- Whole school assemblies that reflect PSHE topics and current issues

- Engaging activities for Children's Mental Health Week

- Regular circle time

- Timetabled PSHE lessons (Jigsaw) as well as a broad and engaging curriculum that incorporates discussions surrounding mental health and wellbeing

- Internal and external mentoring

- Celebration of achievement (Star of the Week, Achievement assemblies, Sticky Sheets, Going for Gold prizes)

Early Identification

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- Analysing behaviour, exclusions, attendance and visits to the medical room

- Staff report concerns about individual children to relevant leaders

- Worry boxes in each class for children to raise anonymous concerns (checked regularly by class teachers)

- Regular Pupil Progress meetings where mental wellbeing concerns can be discussed

- A parental information and health questionnaire on entry to the school

- Gathering information from previous school upon transfer

- Parent interviews in EYFS

- Open-door policy whereby children and parents/carers can raise concerns to any member of staff

- Staff are trained to understand protective and risk factors, types of mental health need and warning signs.

- Initial concerns are recorded on CPOMS to help build a picture of need

Warnings signs may include:

- Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn

- Changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits

- Falling academic achievement

- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide

- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope

- Secretive behaviour

- An increase in lateness or poor attendance

- Reluctance to do PE

- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.

- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

If there is a concern that a child is in immediate danger, the school's child protection and safeguarding policies are followed. It is essential that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgemental towards children who disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of our children is paramount and staff listen rather than advise. Staff must never makes promises of confidentiality when a child is making a disclosure. All disclosures are reported to the DSL and recorded, and appropriate steps are taken to respond to the disclosure. This may include internal

support (well-being practitioner), a meeting with parents, advice from external services or input from Social Services.

We recognise that some children will need ongoing support and we are careful not to label children with diagnoses without prior and sensitive consultation with family/carers and other relevant professionals. We have a duty of care to support children and will seek advice from medical staff and mental health professionals where necessary. When a child leaves an inpatient provision and is transitioning back to school, we will implement an Individual Care Plan to ensure a successful re-integration. In some cases a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, self-harm and eating disorders. We have access to a range of specialist services and during the support will have regular contact with the service to review the support and consider next steps. School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the Mental Health Lead, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Practitioner, the DSL or the SENDCO following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents/carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the parent/carer.

8. Supporting parents/carers

The following are in place to support wellbeing of parents/carers:

- Regular wellbeing coffee mornings for parents/carers

- Access to information about external support services via school website, newsletters and staff

- Access to information about local English language courses for adults

- Mental Health Lead, DSL and Mental Health and Wellbeing Practitioner present in playground in the mornings as often as possible

- Advice for supporting children at home

- PSHE curriculum section on the school website

- *Friends of Anson* support network for parents

When a concern about a child has been raised, the school will:

- Meet with parents and carers (In most cases, parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as where child protection issues are identified)

- Offer information to take away and places to seek further information

- Be available for follow-up conversations

- Make a record of the meeting

- Discuss how the parents and carers can support their child

- Keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions provided

- Get parental consent for an early help referral if appropriate

We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Our primary concern is the children, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

9. Supporting staff

The following are in place to support wellbeing of staff:

- Access to information about external support services via school website or relevant leaders

- Headteacher and Deputy have open-door policy

- Mental Health and Wellbeing Practitioner support

- Staff social events for team-building and boosting morale

- Wellbeing INSETs

- Reduced workload through relaxed marking, no unnecessary planning, autonomy, dedicated time for subject leadership

- Flexible working

- Option to spend planning time off-site

- Fostering a listening culture

- Regular questionnaires to monitor staff wellbeing and address issues

10. Staff training

The following are in place to ensure staff are trained to respond to mental health concerns and understand how best to look after their own wellbeing

- Annual INSET to review safeguarding policy

- Regular INSETs with Mental Health and Wellbeing Practitioner regarding pupil and staff wellbeing

- Training opportunities for Mental Health Lead to ensure up-to-date knowledge of support services, procedures and statistics

- INSETs by external speakers

11. Further information

For support on specific mental health needs:

Anxiety UK www.anxietyuk.org.uk

OCD UK www.ocduk.org

Depression Alliance www.depressoinalliance.org

Eating Disorders www.b-eat.co.uk and www.inourhands.com

National Self-Harm Network www.nshn.co.uk www.selfharm.co.uk

Suicidal thoughts Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org

For general information and support

www.youngminds.org.uk champions young people's mental health and wellbeing

www.mind.org.uk advice and support on mental health problems www.minded.org.uk (e-learning)

www.time-to-change.org.uk tackles the stigma of mental health

www.rethink.org challenges attitudes towards mental health