

Pastoral Care, Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

Great Ponton CE Primary School



“Offering hope, building confidence, developing resilience.”

Approved by:		Date: 18/09/2024
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Offering hope, building confidence, developing resilience

1. Why mental health and wellbeing is important

At Great Ponton Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. All children go through ups and downs during their school career and some face significant life events. In 2020, about 1 in 6 children aged 5 to 16 had a diagnosable mental health need (NHS Digital 2020) and these can have an enormous impact on quality of life, relationships and academic achievement.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy". Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting children's wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a school where:

- All children are valued.
- Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma.
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued.
- Bullying is not tolerated.

In addition to children's wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and wellbeing.

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
- Key information about some common mental health problems.
- Where parents, staff and children can get further advice and support.

3. Definition of mental health and wellbeing

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing "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".

Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/young people to:

- feel confident in themselves.
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately.
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others.
- cope with the stresses of everyday life.
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change.
- learn and achieve.

4. How the policy was developed and who was consulted

The development of this policy was led by Headteacher and Pastoral Lead.

We organised a series of consultations to gather their views:

- School council gave their views on what to teach and the best ways to teach about mental health.
- Parents and carers completed a survey and gave their views on what they wanted their children to be taught and what support would be helpful.
- Staff completed a survey and gave their views on what support they felt the children needed and what support they needed for their own mental health and wellbeing. They also discussed the draft policy at a staff meeting.

In developing this policy, we have taken account of:

- State of the nation 2020: Children and young people's wellbeing
- Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, DfE 2021
- Guidance on teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing, PSHE Association, 2019.
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools, DfE 2018.
- Supporting children with medical conditions, DfE 2017.

5. A whole school approach to promoting positive mental health

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses seven aspects:

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.
2. Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.
3. Helping children to be resilient learners.
4. Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
5. Early identification of children who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services.
6. Effectively working with parents and carers.
7. Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.

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, including those with specific responsibility

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as: physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, being part of a refugee or asylum seeking family, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They should also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy (see appendix 1 on risk and protective factors).

Our Headteacher and our Pastoral Lead, Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead

- Lead and work with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Work with the PSHE Lead on teaching about mental health.
- Provide advice and support to staff and organise training and updates.
- Our Headteacher is the first point of contact with mental health services, and makes individual referrals to them.

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the School environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need

more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to children with mental health needs and their families.

Sources of relevant support include:

- Our own Senior Leadership Team
- Our own Wellbeing and Pastoral Lead
- Our Safeguarding/Child Protection Lead
- Our Class teachers
- School support staff employed to manage mental health needs of particular children
- Our Headteacher who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including children whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.
- Our SENCO

7. Supporting children' positive mental health

We believe the School has a key role in promoting children's positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our School has developed a range of strategies and approaches including:

Pupil-led activities

- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health.
- Peer mentoring – children working together to solve problems
- School council – a group of children supporting younger children at lunchtime and break time. This group will also welcome and support new children at the school.

Transition programmes

- Transition Programme to secondary schools

Class activities

- Feelings boxes - where children can anonymously share worries or concerns in class
- Mental health teaching programmes within the PSHE curriculum and small group work
- Circle times

Whole school

- Weekly celebration assemblies where we celebrate children for showing our qualities in and out of school

- Wellbeing week – whole school focus on doing things which make us feel good
- Displays and information around the School about positive mental health and where to go for help and support
- Small group activities
- Group work with our Pastoral lead to support friendship and social skills.
- Talkabout – a small group intervention to improve children’s communication skills around turn taking, dealing with issues, resolving conflict
- Restorative reflections and conversations

Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing

Through PSHE and the use of Zones of Regulation, we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help children to be more resilient, understand about mental health and be less affected by the stigma of mental health problems.

EYFS & Key Stage 1 children learn:

- To recognise, name and describe feelings including good and not so good feelings, using the Zones of Regulation to support them
- Simple strategies for managing feelings
- How their behaviour affects other people.
- About empathy and understanding other people’s feelings.
- To cooperate and problem solve.
- To motivate themselves and persevere.
- How to calm down.
- About change and loss and the associated feelings (including moving home, losing toys, pets or friends).
- Who to go to if they are worried.
- About different types of teasing and bullying, that these are wrong and unacceptable.
- How to resist teasing or bullying, if they experience or witness it, whom to go to and how to get help.

Key Stage 2 children learn:

- What positively and negatively affects their mental and emotional health (including the media).
- Positive and healthy coping strategies
- About good and not so good feelings using the Zones of Regulation to support them.
- To describe the range and intensity of their feelings to others.
- To recognise and respond appropriately to a wide range of feelings in others.
- To recognise that they may experience conflicting emotions and when they might need to listen to their emotions or overcome them.
- About resilience.
- How to motivate themselves and bounce back if they fail at something.

- How to empathise and be supportive of others.
- About change, including transitions (between Key Stages and schools), loss, separation, divorce and bereavement.
- About the consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including online bullying, prejudice-based language), as well as how to respond and ask for help if they are victims of this themselves.
- About the importance of talking to someone and how to get help.

8. Identifying, referring and supporting children with mental health needs

Our approach:

- Provide a safe environment to enable children to express themselves and be listened to.
- Ensure the welfare and safety of children are paramount.
- Utilise school staff who share a language with pupils to enhance the environment for pupils to express themselves.
- Identify appropriate support for children based on their needs.
- Involve parents and carers when their child needs support.
- Involve children in the care and support they have.
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with children and keep parents and carers updated.

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:

- SDQ (Social Difficulty Questionnaires) to identify individuals that might need support.
- Analysing behaviour, exclusions, visits to the medical room/Health and Welfare Officer, attendance and sanctions.
- Using Characteristics of Effective Behaviour to identify children in EYFS who need support.
- Staff report concerns about individual children to the relevant lead persons.
- Worry boxes in each class for children to raise concerns which are checked by the Class Teachers and Mental Health Leads (these can be anonymous but give an indication of needs in a particular class regularly).
- Pupil Progress Review meetings termly
- Regular meetings for staff to raise concerns.
- A parental information and health questionnaire on entry to the School.
- Gathering information from a previous school at transfer.
- Parental meetings.
- Enabling children to raise concerns to any member of staff.
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns to any member of staff.

All staff at Great Ponton Primary School have had training on the protective and risk factors (see Appendix 1), types of mental health needs (see Appendix 2) and signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health problems. Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the Headteacher, SENCO and Pastoral Lead.

These signs might 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 absenteeism.
- Not wanting to do PE or get changed for swimming.
- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather.
- Drugs or alcohol misuse.
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.

Staff are aware that mental health needs, such as anxiety, might appear as non compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development.

If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of significant harm then the School's child protection procedures are followed. If there is a medical emergency then the School's procedures for medical emergencies are followed.

Disclosures by children and confidentiality

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgemental to 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 make it clear to children that the concern will be shared with the Safeguarding Leads, Mental Health Lead or the SENCO and recorded, in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil.

All disclosures are recorded and held on the pupil's confidential file (CPOMS), including date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps.

Assessment, Interventions and Support

All concerns are reported to the Safeguarding, Mental Health Lead and SENCO are recorded. We then implement our assessment system, which is based on levels of need to ensure that children get the support they need, either from within the School or from an external specialist service. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating.

<p style="text-align: center;">Need</p> <p>The level of need is based on discussions at the regular Inclusion meetings/panel with key members of staff and involves parents and children</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Evidence-based Intervention and Support</p> <p>The kinds of intervention and support provided will be decided in consultation with key members of staff, parents and children For example</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Monitoring</p>
<p>Highest need</p>	<p>CAMHS-assessment, 1:1 or family support or treatment, consultation with school staff and other agencies Other External agency support Other interventions e.g. Educational Psychotherapist If the school, professionals and/or parents conclude that a statutory education, health and care assessment is required, we refer to the SEND policy and SEN School Information Report.</p>	<p>All children needing targeted individualised support will have an Personalised Support Plan (PSP) drawn up setting out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The needs of the children -How the pupil will be supported -Actions to provide that support -Any special requirements <p>Children and parents/carers will be involved in the plan. The plan and interventions are monitored, reviewed and evaluated to assess the impact e.g. through a pre and post SDQ and if needed a different kind of support can be provided. The Care Plan is overseen by the SENCO</p>
<p>Some need</p>	<p>Access to our in school Pastoral Lead, 1:1 intervention, small group intervention, skills for life/wellbeing programmes, circle of friends.</p>	
<p>Low need</p>	<p>General support E.g. class teacher/TA</p>	

9. Support for friends

We recognise that when a pupil is experiencing mental health problems it can be challenging for their friends, who often want to help them but are not sure the best thing to do and can also be emotionally affected. In the case of eating disorders and self harm, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping strategies from each other, and we will consider on a case by case basis what support might be appropriate including one to one and group support.

We will involve the pupil who is suffering and their parents and consider what is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told, how they can best support, things they should avoid doing/saying which may inadvertently cause upset and warning signs that their friend needs help.

We will also make information available about where and how to access information and support for themselves and healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling.

10. Working with specialist services to get swift access to get swift access to the right specialist support and treatment

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, as part of monitoring the children's Personalised Support Plan.

School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the SENCO or Safeguarding Leads following the assessment process and in consultation with his/her parents and carers.

Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs. Consent is not required if staff need to share information regarding safeguarding concerns.

Main specialist service	Referral process
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	Accessed through school, GP or self-referral
Educational Psychotherapist	Accessed through the SENCO

SEND and mental health

Persistent mental health problems may lead to children having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age. In some cases the child may benefit from being identified as having a special educational need (SEN).

11. Involving parents and carers

Promoting mental health

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting children who do have mental health needs.

We ask parents to inform us of any mental health needs their child has and any issues that they think might have an impact on their child's mental health and wellbeing, based on a list of risk factors pertaining to the child or family (see appendix 1). It is very helpful if parents and carers can share information with the School so that we can better support their child from the outset. All information will be treated in confidence.

To support parents and carers:

- We can organise workshops on promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in the home, protective and risk factors, and the Zones of Regulation.
- When needed, we provide one to one meetings with our Educational Psychologist, SENCO or other agencies.
- We also include the mental health topics that are taught in the PSHE curriculum section on the School website.

Supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs

We are aware that parents and carers react in different ways to knowing their child has a mental health problem and we will be sensitive and supportive. We also aim to reassure by explaining that mental health problems are common, that the school has experience of working with similar issues and that help and advice are available.

When a concern has been raised, the School will:

- Contact parents and carers and meet with them (In almost all 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 calls.
- Make a record of the meeting.
- Agree a mental health Pastoral Support Plan including clear next steps.
- 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.

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger and children may choose to tell their parents and carers themselves. We give children the option of informing their parents and carers about their mental health needs for themselves or of accompanying and supporting them to do so.

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.

12. Involving children

We seek pupil's views about our approach, curriculum and in promoting whole school mental health activities.

We always seek feedback from children who have had support to help improve that support and the services they received.

13. Supporting and training staff

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identify mental health needs early in children and know what to do and where to get help.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing.

14. 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.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Protective and Risk factors (adapted from Mental Health and Behaviour DfE November 2018)

	Risk factors	Protective factors
In the child	<p>Genetic influences Specific development delay Communication difficulties Physical illness Academic failure Low self-esteem SEND</p>	<p>Being female (in younger children) Secure attachment experience Outgoing temperament as an infant Good communication skills, sociability Being a planner and having a belief in control Humour Problem solving skills and a positive attitude Experiences of success and achievement Faith or spirituality Capacity to reflect</p>
In the family	<p>Overt parental conflict including domestic violence Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted) Inconsistent or unclear discipline Hostile and rejecting Relationships Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs Physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect Parental psychiatric illness Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder Death and loss – including loss of friendship</p>	<p>At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult) Affection Clear, consistent discipline Support for education Supportive long term relationship or the absence of severe discord</p>
In the school	<p>Bullying Discrimination Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships Negative peer influences Peer pressure Poor pupil to teacher relationships Struggling to keep up with school work</p>	<p>Clear policies on behaviour and bullying 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health Positive classroom Management A sense of belonging Positive peer influences</p>

	Having additional needs eg: language and communication skills Being from an ethnic community Being disabled	
In the community	Socio-economic disadvantage Homelessness Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events Discrimination Other significant life events	Wider supportive network Good housing High standard of living High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying Opportunities for valued social roles Range of sport/leisure activities

Appendix 2 - Specific mental health needs most commonly seen in school-aged children

For information, see Chapter 3 in Mental health and behaviour in schools, DfE, November 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

For support on specific mental health needs

Anxiety UK www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Depression and mental health <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

OCD UK www.ocduk.org

Eating Disorders www.b-eat.co.uk

National Self-Harm Network www.nshn.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

<https://www.actionforhappiness.org/> a movement of people committed to building a happier and more caring society.

<https://www.annafreud.org/> their mission is to transform the experience of children, young people and their families with mental health.