Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy

Queen's Park Primary 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 contribute to her or his community. (World Health Organisation)

At Queen's Park Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupils. We pursue this aim using workplace practices, universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health.

By developing and implementing a practical, relevant and effective mental health policy and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for staff and pupils affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. It is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

It should be read in conjunction with our:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (where the mental health of a pupil overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue)
- Special Needs Policy (where a pupil has an identified special educational need)

Aim of the Policy

At Queen's Park Primary School, we aim to create an environment that promotes positive mental health in all staff and pupils by:

- Increasing understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Providing opportunities for staff to look after their mental wellbeing
- Alerting staff to early warning signs of mental ill health in pupils
- Providing support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Providing support to pupils suffering from mental ill health and their peers and parents or carers

Dissemination

Queen's Park Primary School will share the policy with staff, governors, pupils and parents/carers via the following methods:

- Introduce the policy as part of a staff twilight session, with time for questions and review
- A copy or direct link to the policy will be emailed to all staff
- New staff will receive a copy of this policy during the induction process

- A copy of the policy will be available on display in the staff room
- Salient points from the policy will be shared with pupils via PSHE or tutor periods
- School website
- Via newsletter to parents/carers

Lead Members of Staff

Staff with a specific remit includes:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Mrs Royle
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) – Miss Cullen, Mrs Peck, Miss Jawett
- Mental Health Lead – Mrs Royle
- Occupational Health and Safety Lead – Mrs Royle and Mrs Killip
- Lead First Aider – Mrs Chung
- Pastoral PSHE Lead – Miss Barrett
- Head Teacher – Mrs Royle
- Deputy Head – Miss Cullen
- CPD Lead (for staff training) – Mrs Royle/Miss Cullen

Responsibility

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil/student should speak to the DSL in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the head teacher. If the pupil/student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the School Nurse and contacting the emergency services if necessary. This procedure would be the same with any mental health emergency which could include; serious self – harm, suicidal ideation, plan and intent of suicidal activity.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by DSL

All school staff are encouraged to:

- Understand this policy and seek clarification from management where required
- Consider this policy while completing work-related duties and at any time while representing Queen's Park Primary School
- Support fellow staff in their awareness of this policy
- Support and contribute to Queen's Park Primary School's aim of providing a mentally healthy and supportive environment for all staff.

All school staff have a responsibility to:

- Take reasonable care of their own mental health and wellbeing, including physical health

- Take reasonable care that their actions do not affect the health and safety of other people in the workplace
- Raise concerns with their line manager if they feel there are work issues that are causing them stress and having a negative impact on their well-being

Managers and Senior Leadership have a responsibility to:

- Ensure that all school staff are made aware of this policy
- Actively support and contribute to the implementation of this policy, including its goals
- Manage the implementation and review of this policy
- Champion good management practices and the establishment of a work ethos within Queen's Park Primary School which discourages assumptions about long term commitment to working hours of a kind likely to cause stress and which enables staff to maintain a reasonable "work life balance".
- Promote effective communication and ensure that there are procedures in place for consulting and supporting employees on changes in the organisation, to management structures and working arrangements at both a school-wide and departmental level.
- Encourage initiatives and events that promote health and well-being
- Ensure there are arrangements in place to support individuals experiencing stress, referring them to the school's Occupational Health advisers where appropriate.
- Collate management information which will enable the school to measure its performance in relation to stress management and employee well-being, such as:
    - Sickness absence data
    - Staff turnover, exit interviews
    - Number of self-referrals to the counsellor service
    - Number of referrals to Occupational Health support
    - Numbers of grievance and harassment cases
- Seek the views of employees on the effectiveness of the School's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy and stress management arrangements using staff surveys and other appropriate questionnaires.

Managing Pupil Disclosures

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety, rather than of exploring 'Why?', staff should avoid asking any leading questions.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held in the pupil's confidential file. This should include:

- Date
- Name of member of staff to whom it was disclosed
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the DSL, who will store the record appropriately and offer advice about the next step.

Warning Signs and Recommended Management

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and communicated to the DSLs Mrs Royle, Miss Cullen, Mrs Peck and Miss Jawett. It may also be appropriate to liaise with the wellbeing lead.

Possible warning signs to look out for in pupils/students or their immediate family.

Important Note

The first two points below present a higher degree of risk and will therefore need a separate risk assessment. The template for this can be found in the accompanying toolkit:

Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide, this is a risk and will need a separate risk assessment and action plan to manage the risk accordingly.

Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope. This is a risk and will need a separate risk assessment and action

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends of family
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity or mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Abusing drugs or alcohol in the family
- Changes in clothing e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE/Games or getting changed secretively
- Lateness or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- Increase in lateness or absenteeism

Realistic Expectations

Mental health issues can be ongoing for a long time. They can be highly impactful on a pupil's ability to access school. We need to ensure that all members of staff are realistic in their expectations of affected pupils, to ensure those pupils are not placed under undue stress which may exacerbate their mental health issues.

Expectations should always be led by what is appropriate for a specific pupil at a specific point in their recovery journey rather than by what has worked well for others, so some degree of flexibility is essential.

Expectations to consider addressing include:

- Academic achievement
- Absence and lateness
- Access to extra-curricular activities including sport
- Duration and pace of recovery
- Ability to interact and engage within lessons

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents/carers and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements or precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Emergency procedures /Actions who will do what and when
- The role the school can play

Confidentiality

We should be honest with pupils/students about confidentiality. We should let them know this and discuss with them that it might be necessary to pass the information on:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a pupil without letting them know. Ideally, we should receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another staff member and/or a parent/carer. This would always include pupils/students up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

If acting to safeguard a pupil/student against harm or look out for their welfare it is imperative to share any information you deem important.

In many cases, the parent/carers should be informed, and pupils may choose to tell their parent/carers themselves. If this is the case, depending upon severity and immediacy of risk, 24

hours should be given to share this information before the school contacts the parent/carers. We should always give pupils the option of the school informing the parent/carers for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parent/carers should not be informed, but the DSL must be notified immediately.

Working with Parents/Carers

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parent/carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach. It can be shocking and upsetting for parent/carers to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset. We should therefore give the parent/carers time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information as parents/carers will often find it hard to take in much of the news that we are sharing. We should always provide clear means of how contact can be made with the school regarding further questions and the school should consider booking in a follow up meeting right away as parents/carers may have many questions as they process the information. We should keep a record on each meeting in the child's confidential record. We will provide local emergency mental health crisis service contact telephone numbers for parents as required.

In order to support all parent/carers of children Queen's Park Primary School, we will:

- Update our school resources to provide information about common mental health issues
- Ensure all parent/carers know who to talk to if they have any concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parent/carers
- Keep parent/carers informed about the topics their children are learning about in PSHE

Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends might need additional support. It is important to consider:

- What friends should and should not be told
- How friends can support
- Things friends should avoid doing or saying
- Warning signs to look out for
- How friends can access further support for themselves from the school
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be facing

Staff Training

All staff will receive regular training or guidance about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of the regular child protection training.

Allocated school staff will attend the Mental Health First Aid Training within each school. In order to work closely with the young people to identify and signpost appropriate support and intervention.

The Designated Mental Health Lead in the school has undertaken training provided via the DfE - https://www.gov.uk/guidance/senior-mental-health-lead-training

For those staff members who require more in-depth knowledge additional CPD will be suggested and provided. Where the need to provide some becomes apparent, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning and understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Staff Support

School staff may receive additional support from their line manager to develop effective knowledge, skills and understanding in order to support the child or young person that may require a higher level of support for their emotional and mental health needs. Additional support may be received from the SENCO or the allocated staff member for mental health within the school.

It is widely accepted that adversity and trauma does not only affect the child or young person but the people that are supporting them (Young Minds, n.d a). It is important we recognise the negative impact that of hearing of people's experiences of adversity and trauma can have on our own mental, physical and emotional health. Feeling stressed, overwhelmed or tired from work once in a while is understandable. If you notice this happening regularly it is important to communicate this with your line manager. Protecting our own mental health ensures the children and young people that, we work with have the very best care and support from us.

We will carry out a regular survey with our staff to find out whether they feel supported around their wellbeing and to help identify the gaps in our provision. This will help to ensure ongoing improvements in this area.

Support for our staff can be accessed via the following

- Education Support Partnership - https://www.educationsupport.org.uk
- Anna Freud - https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/self-care-toolkit/
- NHS - https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/mental-wellbeing-audio-guides/
- Every Mind Matters - https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/resources/every-mind-matters-self-care-tool
- World Wildlife Fund - https://www.wwf.org.uk/5-ways-connect-nature-help-our-wellbeing
- Mental Health First Aid England - https://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/resources/address-your-stress/stress-container-resource-download.pdf

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parent/carers are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as staff rooms, library, notice boards and lavatories and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. There are a number of services that are available to the CYP with different levels of support according to the individual young person's need. Details of agencies, charities and funded organisations can be found in the accompanying toolkit. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupils seeking help by ensuring pupils understand.

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen next

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of the PSHE curriculum which includes 'Mental Wellbeing' within statutory Health education. Our PSHE can be viewed here https://queensparkschool.co.uk/pshe/

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort being taught but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum.

Effectiveness of the policy will be assessed through:

- feedback from staff, pupils and parents
- review of the policy by SLT and governors to determine if objectives have been met and to identify barriers and enablers to ongoing policy implementation.

Policy Implementation Date: 01.07.26

Next Review Date: 01.07.28

Signed: M Royle