

# **Mental Health and** **Emotional Well-Being for Pupils Policy**

**Date Prepared:** September 2021

**Date Approved by Governing Body:**

**Date to be reviewed:**

This policy was written in consultation with staff, pupils, parents and professionals involved in mental health and well-being.

### **Policy Statement**

At New Ash Green Primary School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and well-being of our pupils.

All that we do is underpinned by our school core values. We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued.

At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

At our school we:

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings
- help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- help children socially, to form and maintain relationships.
- promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count.
- encourage children to be confident and feel secure to be themselves.
- help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging for all children and staff
- talking about our well-being and mental health
- promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making
- celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
- providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- providing opportunities to reflect.
- access to appropriate support that meets their needs

We pursue our aims through:

- universal, whole school approaches for children
- support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement.
- specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties.

### **Teaching about Mental Health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching but we will also use the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional well-being issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

Teaching about mental health is further underpinned by our core values, the 6 ways to well-being and Mind Fitness activities.

### **In school support**

#### **Pastoral Team:**

The school has a Pastoral Team consisting of Mrs Davin (Deputy Head and Mental health lead), Mrs Evans (SENCO), Mrs Humphreys (Learning Mentor), Mrs Church (FLO) and Mrs Ham (School Counsellor). The Pastoral Team works together to implement, monitor and evaluate intervention for supporting well-being and mental health in school.

#### **Classroom:**

- All children have a daily check in using traffic light cards to gauge how they are, a teacher or an adult in the classroom will check in with a child if they are a red or amber.
- All teachers have regular training on supporting the well-being and mental health of children.
- All staff use the **6 Ways to Well-Being** to support planning and to educate children how to look after their own mental health and well-being (**see appendix a**)
- Staff use mind fitness strategies to support all children
- Well-being and involvement is monitored using the Leuven Scales

#### **Learning mentor:**

- The learning mentor is based in school and will support children with a variety of interventions e.g. Listening Ear, Lego Therapy, ELSA, Draw and Talk. This support is requested by the classroom teacher to the Pastoral Team. Interventions are monitored and evaluated.

#### **Counselling**

- The school has a school counsellor. In liaison with parents, the school can refer a child for specialised support with our School Counsellor. The children have the choice to come to weekly sessions, initially for six weeks, in a confidential, safe and fun space. The one to one sessions are child centred and offer the opportunity for children to share their thoughts and feelings through talking, art, music and movement, story telling and game playing.

The school will make use of resources to assess and track well-being as appropriate including:

- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire
- The Boxall Profile
- Leuven scales

### **External support**

**The school joined the Trailblazer programme in 2019.**

The Emotional Well-being Teams (EWT)/ MHST in Kent are committed to early intervention and prevention of emotional well-being/mental health difficulties.

**For schools the EWT provide:**

- **Workshops for parents** – the EWP's (Emotional well-being practitioner) run workshops on different topics that all parents can access e.g. managing anxiety, challenging behaviour, connect (ways to well-being), returning to school
- **1:1 work with parents** – the EWP's work 1:1 with parents to support parents in managing anxiety, managing challenging behaviour following Anna Freud programme
- **1:1 working with children** – the EWPs work with children to support a variety of low to moderate level need.
- **The EWP's can lead staff training** on mental health and well-being – for teachers and pupils
- **Support for school's** in whole school approach to resilience and well-being
- **The EWP liaises** with the school pastoral team to look at possible support for pupils and ways forward.

**Signposting**

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support. This will be shared through the termly Well-being newsletter.

**Identifying needs and Warning Signs**

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

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional well-being issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the Emotional Well- Being Lead or DSL as appropriate.

**Working with Parents**

In order to support parents and carers we will:

- highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional well-being on our school website

- share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g. through parent forums.
- ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to access support, if they have concerns about their child.
- make our emotional well-being and mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.
- keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

### **Working with other agencies and partners**

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and well-being including:

- The school nurse
- Educational psychology services
- Paediatricians
- The Emotional Well-Being Team
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Virtual School
- Children's services

### **Training**

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep students safe.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate.

Appendix a

#### **6 Ways to well-being:**

- **1. Be Active...** Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity that you enjoy; one that suits your level of mobility and fitness. Daily mile, playtime games
- **2. Keep Learning** ... Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy

achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident, as well as being fun to do. Learning challenge – set a target/ goals

- **3. Give ...** Do something nice for a friend. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with the people around you. Kindness Trees
- **4. Connect ...** With the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day. Focus on relationships within the class, how we support younger pupils?
- **5. Take Notice ...** Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are on a train, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you. Mindfulness sessions, walks in the orchard, time
- **6. Care For The Planet ...** look after your community and the world. Make small changes to your life that will reduce your energy use, recycle more, leave the car at home, use low energy light bulbs, small steps to a greener life can make a difference. What could we do in our classroom, the playground?