



Mental Health and Well-being Policy

Spring 2024

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1. Rational

Mental health and emotional wellbeing are as important as physical health to lead a happy and fulfilling life. As a school we recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. Within their school career all children will experience ups and downs and some may face significant life events. The Department for Education recognises that: *'in order to help their children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy.'*

'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 (WHO)

2. Aims

At Haydon Abbey School and Preschool, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils, parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders.

This policy focuses on pupils' mental health and wellbeing. It aims to:

- Set out our school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all pupils across our school
- Provide guidance to staff on their role in supporting pupils' mental health and wellbeing, including how they can foster and maintain an inclusive culture in which pupils feel able to talk about and reflect on their experiences of mental health
- Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues
- Inform pupils and their parents/carers about the support they can expect from our school in respect of pupils' mental health and wellbeing, and provide them with access to resources

This policy should be read alongside:

- SEND policy
- Behaviour and Relationships policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy was written with regard to:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- Articles 3 and 23 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

4. Developing mental health and well-being provision

The school will use the eight identified principle taken from *'Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing: A whole school and college approach'* (DfE, 2021) when developing an effective mental health and well-being provision. The eight principles promote a whole school approach to emotional health and well-being.



The eight identified principles will underpin the approaches used to support the development and integration of wellbeing strategies within Haydon Abbey School and Pre-School. The policy and curriculum delivery will be tailored to promote the key aspects of improving mental health and emotional wellbeing. It will focus on creating a social, emotional and physically rich environment, where key relationships can thrive and children can feel secure in their learning. The curriculum will promote 'the pupil voice' by fostering their independence, promoting 'good choice making' and actively encouraging our pupils to recognise feelings, whilst learning to express them appropriately.

5. Roles and responsibilities

All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across our school and for understanding risk factors. If any members of staff are concerned about a pupil's mental health or wellbeing, they should inform the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Lead (D/DSL).

Certain members of staff have extra duties to lead on mental health and wellbeing in school. These members of staff include:

- Miss Ashleigh Ferdinand – Headteacher, Attendance Lead and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Mrs Hannah Jones – Deputy Headteacher and Behaviour Lead

- Mrs Liz Jones and Mrs Lynette Williamson - Special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs)
- Miss Sophie Hardy-Jack – Senior Mental Health Lead
- Miss Emily Pearce - PSHE Lead
- Ms Kaily Schmidt – Senior Pastoral LSA
- Mrs Affshan Sheikh – Family Support Worker
- Mr Tom Elliot - Named Governor with lead on mental health

6. Warning signs

All staff will be on the lookout for signs that a pupil's mental health is deteriorating. Some warning signs include:

- Changes in:
 - Mood or energy level
 - Eating or sleeping patterns
 - Attitude in lessons or academic attainment
 - Level of personal hygiene
- Social isolation
- Poor attendance or punctuality
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, worthlessness or feeling like a failure
- Rapid weight loss or gain
- Secretive behaviour
- Covering parts of the body that they wouldn't have previously
- Refusing to participate in P.E. or being secretive when changing clothes
- Physical pain or nausea with no obvious cause
- Physical injuries that appear to be self-inflicted
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Using social media or group chats to voice mental health concerns

7. Managing disclosures

If a pupil makes a disclosure about themselves or a peer to a member of staff, staff should remain calm, non-judgmental and reassuring.

Staff will focus on the pupil's emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to find out why they are feeling that way or offering advice.

Staff will always follow our school's safeguarding policy and pass on all concerns to the DSL/mental health lead. All disclosures are recorded and stored in the pupil's confidential file on CPOMs.

When making a record of a disclosure, staff will include:

- The full name of the pupil(s) involved
- The date, time and location of the disclosure

- The context in which the disclosure was made
- Any questions asked or support offered by the member of staff
- Any agreed actions of next steps e.g. speaking with parents or making a referral to an outside agency

8. Confidentiality

Staff will not promise a pupil that they will keep a disclosure secret – instead they will be upfront about the limits of confidentiality.

A disclosure cannot be kept secret because:

- Being the sole person responsible for a pupil's mental health could have a negative impact on the member of staff's own mental health and wellbeing
- The support put in place for the pupil will be dependent on the member of staff being at school
- Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the pupil in question

Staff should always share disclosures with at least 1 appropriate colleague. This will usually be a DSL (or DDSL) or mental health lead. If information needs to be shared with other members of staff or external professionals, it will be done on a need-to-know basis.

Before sharing information disclosed by a pupil with a third party, the member of staff will discuss it with the pupil and explain:

- Who they will share the information with
- What information they will share
- Why they need to share that information

Staff will attempt to receive consent from the pupil to share their information, but the safety of the pupil comes first.

Parents/carers will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case the Child Protection Policy will be followed.

8.1 Process for managing confidentiality around disclosures

1. Pupil makes a disclosure
2. Member of staff offers support
3. Member of staff explains the issues around confidentiality and rationale for sharing a disclosure with a DSL or the mental health lead.
4. Member of staff will attempt to get the pupil's consent to share – if no consent is given, explain to the pupil who the information will be shared with and why
5. Member of staff will record the disclosure on CPOMs and share the information with the chosen elected member of staff
6. The DSL (or DDSL) or the mental health lead will inform the parent/carers
7. Any other relevant members of staff or external professionals will be informed on a need-to-know basis

9.Supporting pupils

Our school is committed to fostering a nurturing environment that prioritises the mental health and well-being of every pupil. All staff are trained to understand the clear and vital connection between positive well-being and a pupil's ability to access learning and achieve their full potential. By promoting emotional resilience, recognising signs of distress, and implementing supportive strategies, we ensure that every child feels valued, safe, and equipped to succeed academically and personally. This holistic approach underscores our dedication to helping pupils thrive both in school and beyond.

9.1 Baseline support for all pupils

As part of our school's commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all pupils, our school offers support to all pupils by:

- Raising awareness of mental health during assemblies, circle time, PSHE and mental health awareness weeks
- Signposting all pupils to sources of support e.g. Childline
- Creating a culture where there are discussions about mental health
- Monitoring pupils' mental health through assessments, e.g. a strengths and difficulties questionnaire
- Appointing a senior mental health lead with a strategic oversight of our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Offering pastoral support through the dedicated team based in the school's Seaton Suite
- Making classrooms a safe space to discuss mental health and wellbeing through interventions such as:
 - Worry boxes
 - Circle time

9.2 Assessing what further support is needed

If a pupil is identified as having a mental health need, a DSL or the mental health lead will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to assessing the support our school can provide, further to the baseline support detailed above in section 9.1.

Our school will offer support in cycles of:

- Assessing what the pupil's mental health needs are
- Creating a plan to provide support
- Taking the actions set out in the plan
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the support offered

9.3 Internal mental health interventions

Where appropriate, a pupil will be offered support that is tailored to their needs as part of the graduated approach detailed above. The support offered at our school includes:

- Nurture groups
- ELSA interventions
- Daily check-ins
- Reduced timetable

- Drawing and Talking
- Play Therapy
- Accessing to a Key Adult
- Access to the calm room or Zen Dens
- Adapted timetable e.g. soft start
- Access to alternative learning spaces e.g. The Hub

9.4 Individual SEMH Support Plans

A pupil will be offered an SEMH Support Plan if they are routinely accessing support which is additional to and different from the majority of their peers.

SEMH Support Plans are written in collaboration with the pupil (if appropriate), their parent/carer, and any other relevant professionals.

The pupil's SEMH Support Plan will contain the following details:

- The mental health concern (and its triggers, signs, symptoms and treatments)
- The pupil's needs resulting from the condition
- Specific support for the pupil's educational, social and emotional needs
- The level of support needed
- Who will provide the support
- Who in our school needs to be aware of the child's condition
- What to do in an emergency including a Risk Assessment

9.5 Making external referrals

If a pupil's needs cannot be met by the internal offer our school will make, or encourage parents/carers to make, a referral for external support.

A pupil could be referred to:

- Their GP or a paediatrician
- CAMHS
- Mental health charities (e.g. [Samaritans](#), [Mind](#), [Young Minds](#), [Kooth](#))
- Local counselling services
- Mental Health Support Team (MHST)

10. Supporting and collaborating with parents/carers

We will work with parents/carers to support pupils' mental health by:

- Asking parents/carers to inform us of any mental health needs their child is experiencing, so we can offer the right support
- Informing parents/carers of mental health concerns that we have about their child

- Engaging with parents/carers to understand their mental health and wellbeing issues, as well as that of their child, and support them accordingly to make sure there is holistic support for them and their child
- Highlighting sources of information and support about mental health and wellbeing on our school website, including the mental health and wellbeing policy
- Liaising with parents/carers to discuss strategies that can help promote positive mental health in their child
- Providing guidance to parents/carers on navigating and accessing relevant local mental health services or other sources of support (e.g. parent/carer forums)
- Keeping parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their child is learning about in PSHE, and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

When informing parents/carers about any mental health concerns we have about their child, we will endeavour to do this face-to-face.

These meetings can be difficult, so our school will ensure that parents/carers are given time to reflect on what has been discussed, and that lines of communication are kept open at the end of the meeting.

A record of what was discussed, and action plans agreed upon in the meeting will be recorded and added to the pupil's confidential record on CPOMs.

If appropriate, an SEMH Support Plan will be created in collaboration with parents/carers

11. Supporting peers

Watching a friend experience poor mental health can be very challenging for pupils. Pupils may also be at risk of learning and developing unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other.

We will offer support to all pupils impacted by mental health directly and indirectly. We will review the support offered on a case-by-case basis. Support might include:

- Strategies they can use to support their friends
- Things they should avoid doing/saying
- Warning signs to look out for
- Signposting to sources of external support

In addition, the school works in partnership with Bucks Mind mental health charity to train a team of 10 Y6 pupils to act as Mind Ambassadors within the school. Supported by a key adult (currently Mrs Lane – Learning Mentor) the children can be the first port of call to lend a listening ear to other children who have low-level worries or concerns.

12. Whole school approach to promoting mental health awareness

At our school, we take a whole-school approach to promoting mental health awareness. This involves fostering a supportive and inclusive environment where mental health is openly discussed and valued.

12.1 Mental health in the curriculum

Through our curriculum pupils are taught to:

- Keep themselves safe
- Understand their own emotional state through emotional literacy (Zones of Regulation)
- Understand the concepts of mental health and wellbeing

- The regulating and calming strategies that can be used by all pupils
- Talk to a trust adult at home or school if they have any worries or concerns that might affect their well-being

13. Training

All staff will be offered training so they:

- Have a good understanding of what pupils' mental health needs are
- Know how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health in primary aged children
- Know a clear process to follow if they identify a pupil in need of help

14. Support for staff

We recognise that supporting a pupil experiencing poor mental health can affect that staff member's own mental health and wellbeing. To help with this we will:

- Treat mental health concerns seriously
- Offer staff supervision sessions
- Support staff experiencing poor mental health themselves
- Create a pleasant and supportive work environment
- Offer an employee assistance programme through Education Support - **08000 562 561**

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing board.

Appendix 1: Further information and sources of support about common mental health issues

Below is sign-posted information and guidance about the issues most commonly seen in school-aged children. The links will take you through to the most relevant page on the listed website. Some pages are aimed primarily at parents but they are listed here because the links are useful for school staff too.

Support on all of these issues can be accessed via Young Minds (www.youngminds.org.uk), Mind (www.mind.org.uk) and for e-learning opportunities Minded (www.minded.org.uk).

Self-harm

Self-harm describes any behaviour where a young person causes harm to themselves in order to cope with thoughts, feelings or experiences they are not able to manage in any other way. It most frequently takes the form of cutting, burning or non-lethal overdoses in adolescents, while younger children and young people with special needs are more likely to pick or scratch at wounds, pull out their hair or bang or bruise themselves.

Online support www.selfharm.co.uk National Self-Harm Network: www.nshn.co.uk

Depression

Ups and downs are a normal part of life for us all, but for someone who is suffering from depression these ups and downs may be more extreme. Feelings of failure, hopelessness, numbness or sadness may invade their day-to-day life over an extended period of weeks or months, and have a significant impact on their behaviour and ability and motivation to engage in day-to-day activities.

Online support Depression Alliance: www.depressionalliance.org/information/what-depression

Anxiety, panic attacks and phobias

Anxiety can take many forms in children and young people, and it is something that each of us experiences at low levels as part of normal life. When thoughts of anxiety, fear or panic are repeatedly present over several weeks or months and/or they are beginning to impact on a young person's ability to access or enjoy day-to-day life, intervention is needed.

Online support Anxiety UK: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Obsessions and compulsions

Obsessions describe intrusive thoughts or feelings that enter our minds which are disturbing or upsetting; compulsions are the behaviours we carry out in order to manage those thoughts or feelings. For example, a young person may be constantly worried that their house will burn down if they don't turn off all switches before leaving the house. They may respond to these thoughts by repeatedly checking switches, perhaps returning home several times to do so. Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) can take many forms - it is not just about cleaning and checking.

Suicidal feelings

Young people may experience complicated thoughts and feelings about wanting to end their own lives. Some youtube people never act on these feelings though they may openly discuss and explore them, while other young people die suddenly from suicide apparently out of the blue.

Online support Prevention of young suicide UK PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org

Eating problems

Food, weight and shape may be used as a way of coping with, communicating about difficult thoughts, feelings and behaviours that a young person experiences day to day. Some young people develop eating disorders such as anorexia (where food intake is restricted), binge eating disorder and bulimia nervosa (a cycle of bingeing and purging). Other young people, particularly those of primary or preschool age, may develop problematic behaviours around food including refusing to eat in certain situations or with certain people. This can be a way of communicating messages the child does not have the words to convey.

Online support Beat - the eating disorder charity: www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/ Eating Difficulties in Younger Children and when to worry: www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/a-z-guide/eating-problems/

Appendix 2: CAMHS referral process

<https://www.elft.nhs.uk/camhs/where-we-work/south-bedfordshireluton-camhs>

Appendix 3: Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis

