

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING POLICY

Policy Statement:

At Moorland Junior School we are committed to supporting the positive mental health and wellbeing of our whole community of children, staff, parents and carers.

Our ethos is supportive, caring and respectful. We understand how important positive mental health and wellbeing is to our lives. We recognise that children's mental health is a vital factor in their overall wellbeing and how it can affect their learning and achievements. Our School encourages children to be open and we support all children to have their voice heard.

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". Our School is a place for children to experience a nurturing and supportive environment. We support the children to develop their self-esteem and build resilience. We understand all children and their families go through ups and downs, and some face significant life events.

Our culture of nurturing children and building resilience to mental health problems means our School is a safe place where:

- Every child feels valued;
- Every child has a sense of belonging;
- Every child feels able to talk openly with trusted members of staff about their problems;
- Positive mental health is promoted;
- Bullying is not tolerated.

We recognise the importance of supporting positive mental health and wellbeing to the whole School community.

At Moorland Junior School positive mental health is everybody's responsibility.

Policy Scope

This Policy is a guide for all teaching and non-teaching staff. It outlines our approach and commitment to promoting and supporting positive mental health and wellbeing in the whole School community. It should be read and understood alongside KCSIE (2020), our Child Protection and Safeguarding, PSHE, Anti-bullying, Learning Support and Behaviour policies.

Purpose of the Policy

This Policy sets out:

- How we promote and support positive mental health in the whole School community;
- How we identify and support children with mental health needs;
- How we prevent mental health problems;
- How we support whole families in dealing with children's mental health problems;
- How we support staff in spotting early warning signs in children and addressing mental health problems.

Definition of Mental Health and Wellbeing

“A state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the natural stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.” *World Health Organisation*

“The strength and capacity of our minds to grow and develop, to be able to overcome difficulties and challenges, and make the most of our abilities and opportunities.” *Young Minds*

We recognise that mental health and wellbeing is not simply the absence of mental health problems. We know building children’s confidence and self-esteem in a safe environment is vital to positive mental health and successful learning outcomes.

At our School we want all children to:

- Understand their emotions and experiences;
- Form and maintain friendships and relationships;
- Be able to express a range of emotions appropriately;
- Develop resilience and cope with setbacks;
- Manage the stresses of everyday life and be able to deal with change;
- Learn and achieve.

We maintain a mentally healthy environment for pupils and staff by:

- Promoting our School rules and values, and encouraging a sense of belonging and community;
- Providing opportunities to develop self-worth;
- Valuing each pupil for who they are;
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements;
- Supporting our children to have their say and participate in decision-making;
- Raising awareness amongst staff about early warning signs and symptoms of mental health issues;
- Supporting staff who are struggling with their own mental health problems.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

All teaching and non-teaching staff have a responsibility and important role in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and each other. We understand some children will need additional help and we know all staff have a responsibility to look out for early warning signs to ensure children get the early intervention and support they need.

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the School environment, or with guidance from external professionals. We have links with mental health professionals and organisations that provide support with mental health needs to children and their families.

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of a pupil or other staff member, in the first instance they should speak to our Pastoral Manager, DSLs or SENDCo.

All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children’s experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

If a child or staff member presents a medical emergency then relevant procedures must be followed, including involving the emergency services.

Promoting and Supporting Children's Positive Mental Health

Our School promotes positive mental health and we aim to prevent mental health problems through our developed range of activities and strategies including:

- Transition programme – activities (including safety, citizenship and first aid) to support Year 6 children moving onto senior school.
- Whole School initiatives – assemblies; School Council; displays and information around School.

Through our whole-School PSHE programme, we teach social and emotional skills to develop the children's confidence and resilience. In KS1, we explore simple strategies for managing feelings and who to go to if they are feeling worried or upset. In KS2, we help the children to develop positive coping strategies and build their understanding of how to motivate themselves, be supportive of others, and the importance of talking to someone and how to get help.

Identifying and supporting children with mental health needs

Our approach is to encourage and support children to express themselves and be listened to in a safe environment.

All staff have a responsibility to facilitate and support positive mental health. We aim to spot the early warning signs of mental health issues and to identify appropriate support for the children based on their needs. We involve parents and carers wherever possible and also the children themselves in the care and support they need in School.

We take a whole-community approach towards the mental health of our pupils. Our aim is to support the whole family, if possible, but we recognise that we are teachers not mental health professionals. This means regular communication with parents explaining our concerns if appropriate and giving parents guidance about who they can talk to about their children's mental health problems. We involve parents and carers, advise parents to engage the services of mental health professionals if required, and work with professional partners and agencies where necessary.

Disclosures by children of mental health concerns

Our School recognises the importance of staff remaining calm, supportive and non-judgemental with children who disclose a concern. Staff should make it clear to the children that the concern will be shared with the relevant staff to help them and get the support they need. Staff understand they need to listen, not advise.

Interventions and Support

All concerns are recorded. The Pastoral Manager, with the DSL and SENDCo, assesses the level of need to ensure the child gets the appropriate support from within School or from an external health professional. We aim to put early interventions in place wherever possible and to prevent problems escalating.

Following an assessment;

- a plan will be put in place setting out how the pupil will be supported;
- action needed to provide that support; and
- regular reviews to assess the effectiveness of the provision and changes made where necessary.

We have access to a range of specialist services, including CAMHS. We involve the children themselves and their parents or carers, and if appropriate put in place support for their friends/peers in School. We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate.

Reviewed by Hayley Mosscrop, April 2025