Great Sankey Primary School

Mental Health Policy

September 2024

'Together We Learn and Grow'

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 make a contribution to her or his community.

(World Health Organization)

At Great Sankey Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health.

Aims

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors. This policy should be read in conjunction with our PSHE Policy and the SEND policy where a student has an identified special educational need.

The Policy Aims to:
- ♣ Promote positive mental health in all staff and students
- ♣ Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- ♣ Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- ♣ Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- ♣ Provide support to students suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:
- ♣ Lisa Wilding - Designated Safeguarding Lead
- ♣ Thomas Gawne & Sarah Leah - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads
- ♣ Jayne Wrangles - Mental Health Lead, PSHE, SMSC and RSE Lead
- ♣ Nia Williams - Lead First Aider / SENDco / LAC / PLAC Lead
- ♣ Sarah Leah - Pastoral Lead & ELSA
- ♣ Neesha Culverwell – Pastoral support

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the mental health lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated child protection office of staff or the head teacher. If the student presents a medical emergency, then the normal

procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary. Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Pastoral Lead / SENDco.

We also have weekly access to the School Link Mental Health Support Team (Karen Hennis) and are allocated a worker to support recognised pupils. This takes place within the school building. We also have access to the full team via telephone consultation.

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our bespoke developmental PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We follow the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

My Happy Mind is used fortnightly from Nursery – Year 6. This resource enables children to build a toolbox of self-help skills to help them navigate their feelings and emotions. My Happy Mind aims to provide children with mental and emotional wellbeing strategies to help them develop the knowledge and skills needed in the modern world.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as common rooms and corridor areas and will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum.

Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of student help-seeking by ensuring students understand:
♣ What help is available
♣ Who it is aimed at
♣ How to access it
♣ Why to access it
♣ What is likely to happen next

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with a member of the Mental Health Team.

Possible warning signs include:
♣ Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental

- ♣ Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- ♣ Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- ♣ Changes in activity and mood
- ♣ Lowering of academic achievement
- ♣ Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- ♣ Abusing drugs or alcohol
- ♣ Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- ♣ Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- ♣ Secretive behaviour
- ♣ Skipping PE or getting changed secretively
- ♣ Lateness to or absence from school
- ♣ Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- ♣ An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Working with All Parents
Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we will:
- ♣ Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- ♣ Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- ♣ Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- ♣ Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- ♣ 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.

Supporting Peers
When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. 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 may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the student who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:
- ♣ What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- ♣ How friends can best support
- ♣ Things friends should avoid doing/saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- ♣ Warning signs that their friend help (e.g., signs of relapse) Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:
- ♣ Where and how to access support for themselves
- ♣ Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- ♣ Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

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. We will host relevant information on our virtual learning environment for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. 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 due developing situations with one or more students. Staff will be signposted to virtual training using the CPD available on the National College platform.