



## **Townhill Infant School**

### **Mental Health and well-being policy**

This policy needs to be read alongside the school safeguarding policy, SEN policy and sex and relationships policy.

At Townhill Infant School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. 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 better
- 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 embrace and celebrate individual's uniqueness
- 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.
- 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
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement.
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long term difficulties

### **Lead Members of Staff**

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Beverly Corbin- Designated safeguarding lead
- Wendy Jones - Designated safeguarding officer/SENCO
- Lisa Hiscock- Designated safeguarding office/SENCO
- Charlotte Wimbourne- Emotional Literacy Support assistant –ELSA

### **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 SMSC curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching but we will also use a wide variety of resources; PSHE Association Guidance, BBC TEACH, HAMWIC mental health resources and to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

Additionally, we will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing students who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting students to support any of their friends who are facing challenges

### **Targeted support**

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- Circle time approaches or 'circle of friends' activities.
- Targeted use of a variety of SMSC resources
- Managing feelings resources e.g. 'worry boxes'
- Managing emotions resources such as reframing tools, ANTS, TAPS and individual action plans
- SMSC curriculum and lessons specifically focussed on mental health and well being
- ELSA support both individual and group.
- Therapeutic activities including art, lego, yoga, theraplay and mindfulness
- Promoting healthy lifestyles through the PE and science curriculum to support mental health and wellbeing
- Transition support to junior school
- Quiet areas within the playground and classroom

- Nurture Groups
- Positive play opportunities at playtimes

The school will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate including:

- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire
- The Boxall Profile
- individual action plans, TAPS, reframing plan and identifying mental health tool.

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We work closely with a range of stakeholders; parents, social care, CAMHS, MHST and school nurses in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of our children. The HAMWIC trust inclusion team provide the school with additional help through resources and in school face to face support.

We ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems;
- Working closely with Southampton Children's Services, Early help, CAMHS, MHST and other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral;
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers. If appropriate an Individual Care Plan is completed as the first stage of a 'stepped care' approach.
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective.
- Ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, including CAMHS and MHST, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur;
- Provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should take account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality;

- Provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it.

### **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 is published on the school website, displayed in all classrooms and shared with parents in correspondence sent home.

### **Identifying needs and Warning Signs**

The following are indicators of potential mental health and well-being difficulties;

- Attendance- increase in absence from school
- Punctuality – increase in lateness
- Relationships - Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Approach to learning – change in attitude, concentration, productivity or lowering of achievement
- Physical indicators – signs of harm that are repeated or appear non accidental
- Negative or change in behaviour patterns- changes in activity and mood
- Family circumstances – parental separation, new blended family, change in home for example loss of employment or abuse of drugs and alcohol
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators including changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Becoming socially withdrawn from peers
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

School staff are aware and vigilant of these warning signs which could 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 the designated child protection and safeguarding officer or the emotional wellbeing lead as appropriate.

### **Managing disclosures**

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. The principles of the 7 R's (within the schools safeguarding policy) will be followed when managing a disclosure.

All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on CPOMS, including:

- Date

- Name of member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Nature of the disclosure & main points from the conversation

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a child, then this will be discussed with the student. We will tell them:

- Who we are going to tell
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them
- When we're going to tell them

This information will be shared with Beverly Corbin- the designated safeguarding lead or in her absence Wendy Jones or Lisa Hiscock the designated safeguarding officers.

The disclosure will be reviewed and then the necessary actions will be taken as deemed necessary in line with this policy and the schools safeguarding policy.

We will inform parents within 24 hours, and in most circumstances we will endeavour to do this on the same day.

However, if a pupil gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, parents may not be informed based on the schools assessment and advice from social care, then the schools safeguarding/child protection procedures will be followed.

### **Working with Parents**

We are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and come to terms with the situation.

We will work in partnership with parents to address any issues or difficulties and support them in dealing with these at home. This will include signposting to helpful resources, access to other services and if appropriate an individual plan.

In addition to specific individualised support for parents we will;

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get access to this, if they have concerns about their child.
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents on the school's website

- 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 the SMSC curriculum by sharing this on the school website.

### **Supporting Staff**

It is recognised at our school that promoting staff health and emotional wellbeing should be an integral part of the whole school approach to mindfulness and mental wellbeing. An open door policy is always made available if staff need to speak to someone about concerns or personal wellbeing. We believe in maintaining a positive work life balance. Time is made available in the school day for staff to fulfil responsibilities.

Signposting to materials about mental health and wellbeing is also made available.

Steps taken to support staff wellbeing by developing a positive work life balance are:

- Planning time (PPA) during the school day
- No staff meeting during the week of a Parent's Evening
- Preparation time given in the week for staff leading a staff meeting/training
- Management time for subject/key stage leads
- A school diary / plan shared with staff at the start of each school year and each term highlighting the key dates, deadlines and school events
- A day given for teachers to write school reports
- Changes to marking and feedback expectations, enabling the majority of marking and feedback to take place during a lesson, therefore reducing teacher workload
- Staff meetings limited to 1 hour
- Designated well-being officer with responsibility for signposting staff to support
- Well-being display in the staffroom with information and support for mental health and well-being.

### **Training**

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular safeguarding training 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 due developing situations with one or more students.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the head teacher or SENCO who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

This policy will be reviewed annually in line with current national policy and procedures on Mental health.

Policy date April 2021

Review date April 2022

