

Dimple Well Infant School and Nursery



Mental Health Policy

Approved by Governors	2023
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Policy Statement

“Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in” (World Health Organization)

At Dimple Well, we aim to promote positive mental health for every child, parent, member of staff and the wider community.

We recognise that every individual has mental health and that no one’s mental health remains the same as they move through life. Everyone’s mental health can move up and down the continuum and can fluctuate due to a variety of different factors. We are all at different places on that continuum at any given time, depending on our lives and what might be happening for us. Depending on our ability to cope, we may move up and down from day to day, week to week, or even year to year. Everyone has different triggers, flashpoints and levels of resilience. It is important to be aware that some people mask how they are feeling.

The Mental Health Continuum



Research shows that 1 in 6 children and 1 in 4 adults in England have a probable mental health disorder and it has been found that 75% of mental health issues start before the age of 18. We recognise and understand the importance of teaching young children how to look after their mental health and emotional wellbeing and is a golden thread that runs through our entire curriculum and our school ethos CARES. We strongly believe children need to feel happy and safe before they can learn.

All staff are aware of what early warning signs can look like and how to signpost help to children, parents, colleagues and people in the wider community. In school we have a staff mental health team who are trained in Mental Health First Aid and work closely with the leadership team to support anyone who may be struggling.

Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that someone has suffered or is suffering abuse. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for children affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health. All staff have received training around trauma informed practice.

This policy and procedures comply with the public sector equality duty in the Equality Act 2010 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014.

This policy runs alongside our school safeguarding, online safety and behaviour policies.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all children, staff, parents and in the wider community.
- Increase understanding and awareness of 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 children, staff and parents who may be struggling with their own mental health.

Lead Members of Staff

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

- **Mrs B Poole** - Senior Mental Health Lead/ Mental Health First Aider/ Deputy Safeguarding Lead/ Online Safety Lead (Mental Health Team)
- **Mrs S Haley** - Mental Health First Aider (Mental Health Team)
- **Miss S Hemmingway** - Mental Health First Aider (Mental Health Team)
- **Mrs M Finney** - Mental Health First Aider (Mental Health Team)
- **Mrs H Williams** - Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher
- **Mrs B Robson** - Deputy Safeguarding Lead, Assistant Headteacher
- **Mrs H Allsopp** – Safeguarding and Mental Health Governor
- **Dr John Dye** - Online Safety Governor, Chair of Governors

Only appropriate trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health disorder. Staff are well placed to observe children on a day-to-day basis and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Senior Mental Health Lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the Child Protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead / Deputy or the designated governor. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the

procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Individual Care Plans

We will draw up an individual care plan for children causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a child's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our children to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. We have ensured the PSHE Association Guidance is fully covered in our PSHE scheme of work. The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our children will also be included in weekly assemblies and stories. Where possible, school will take part in initiatives such as World Mental Health Day and Children's Mental Health Week.

Lessons in Foundation stage include teaching about:

- Identifying and talking about feelings
- Talking about what makes us feel good/worried
- Introducing class feelings charts, worry boxes
- Meditating/breathing/calming down techniques
- Importance of physical activity, good sleep routine, managing screen time

Lessons in Key Stage 1 include teaching about everything above and:

- Understanding how feelings affect behaviours
- The link between mental and physical health
- Being risk aware and how to manage risks
- Managing the transition to Junior School

All classes have feelings charts and worry boxes in their classrooms for children to access daily. Children also have access to a communal feelings box in the corridor for when they are feeling 'big emotions'.

All children in Upper Foundation and KS1 have access to daily meditating and breathing exercises after lunchtime. Upper Foundation take part in extra physical activity before lunchtime every day by doing 'Go Noodle' activities. Whole school are encouraged to include extra physical activity wherever possible.

In school we have a children's "Wellbeing Team" with a representative from each class. The Wellbeing Team meet every half term with our school's Future In Mind Senior Mental Health Practitioner to discuss ideas and implement new initiatives within school.

Signposting

We will ensure that children, staff and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. Safeguarding and Mental Health Teams names are displayed around school. Signposting, information, guidance and advice are available on the school website. Further information will also be posted on our social media page and Parent Hub.

Warning Signs

School staff are aware of possible warning signs which indicate somebody 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 Senior Mental Health Lead and Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Possible warning signs include:

- Any change in behaviour
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family and/or 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
- Attempting to avoid P.E. or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Managing disclosures

For details of how a disclosure would be managed, please refer to our Safeguarding Policy. All staff have a disclosure reminder card in the back of their lanyard.

Working with Parents

In order to support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health guidance and updates on our school website, social media and Parent Hub

- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their own child, a friend of their child or themselves
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can promote 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
- Work closely with outside agencies such as CAMHS and offer opportunities for them to come into school

Supporting Each Other

When a child, parent or staff member is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for those around them. Colleagues and friends often want to support but do not know how. Support for children will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the pupil who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What would be helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support
- Things friends should avoid doing or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend may need help, for example they appear upset or their emotional state has changed.

Support for staff will be provided by through a meeting with a colleague or member of the Mental Health Team or Leadership Team or School Advisory Service.

Additionally, we will offer guidance of:

- Where and how to access support for themselves or others
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

Training

All staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health as part of their regular safeguarding training.