

Graham James Primary Academy



Pupil Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

June 2023



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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 his or her community. (World Health Organisation)

At Graham James Primary Academy, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupils. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom nationally, 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.

Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and well-being. The policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

The policy should be read in conjunction with other related policies such as our SEND policy where the identified pupil has an identified special educational need and our Safeguarding Policy, where relevant.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils
- 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 pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents or 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: Our SENDCO, Safeguarding Lead and Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the relevant members of staff. If there is a fear that a pupil may be in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated child protection officer. If a student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff.

Where a referral to the school wellbeing service, PASS or CAHMS/CYPMHS is appropriate this should be led and managed by the Mental Health lead or Safeguarding lead.

Teaching about Mental Health

Children take part in regular Personal, Social and Health Education, in which they are promoted to build their resilience, become safety aware, knowledgeable of the British Values, develop their understanding of society and become compassionate.

We teach children how to 'protect' their mental health, through having a balanced diet, regular exercise, helping others, thinking positive things about themselves, taking time to relax, socialising with friends in person and asking for help. We promote resilience through Growth Mindset and the power of 'Yet', ensuring that children understand that if they cannot do something, they are continually growing as a person and simply cannot do it 'yet'.

Children take part in national events such as World Mental Health Day, where children focus on mental health and practise different relaxing strategies that they can apply throughout their lives.

We encourage our children to see themselves as part of the Graham James Primary Academy community and having a responsibility towards each other. In order to promote this, we offer all children opportunities to have responsibilities within the classroom; children within Year Six lead our Buddy assemblies, ensuring that the pupil voice of all children is heard for important decisions. We also provide opportunities for older children to support younger children with reading and during lunchtime play through our Mental Health Champions programme.

Assemblies are used to reinforce positive messages.

Warning signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing poor mental health or emotional well being issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing them should discuss these with the Mental Health Lead.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or 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 winter
- Secretive behaviour in winter
- Skipping PE or wanting to change secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

This list is not exhaustive.

Managing Disclosures

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about their mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff should always be calm, staff and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'why?' All disclosures should be recorded in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regard to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a student on, then we should discuss with the student:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a pupil without consulting or informing parents first, ideally gaining consent. However, there may be situations e.g. where a pupil is at serious risk of harm when information must be shared with another member of staff more speedily.

It is advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the mental health lead, this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the student, but it also ensures continuity of care in our absence; and it provides an extra source of ideas and support.

If a child gives us a reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues or safeguarding issues, parents may not be informed but the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed in accordance with our safeguarding policy.

Consistent Management Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual consistent management plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, parents and relevant health care professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupils condition
- Special requirements or strategies that are effective in supporting their Mental Health (This can include known triggers, preventative strategies and responding strategies)
- Medication and Side effects
- What to do and who to contact in an emergency

Working with Parents

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about 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 if they have a concern about their child
- 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 and share ideas for exploring and extending this at home.

Support for Pupils

- All pupils will be able to access a range of support within the school. We encourage children to share their thoughts and feelings and develop a good understanding of managing their emotions.
- PSHE lessons support the teaching of wellbeing and mental health as well as circle time. Assemblies are used to reinforce positive messages.
- Throughout the school all staff promote growth mindset and the use of sentence structures that encourage children to think in open minded ways.
- Pupils who need support should be discussed with the Mental Health lead to ensure that the correct signposting and support is gained
- Pupils requiring more support can be supported through Talk and Draw Therapy where they are encouraged to share their emotions

- Pupils who need professional and medical support will be referred to CAMHS (Children and adolescent mental health services) or CYPMHS (children and young people's mental health services)
- Our Mental Health Policy will be made accessible to parents
- Share ideas with parents about how parents can support positive mental health in their children
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

Supporting Peers

When a pupil 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 or if whole class learning is needed. Support to peers will be guided through conversations with the initial parent of the pupil who is suffering. Information to discuss will be:

- What is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can be support
- Things friends should avoid doing or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend needs help

Additionally we will discuss with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friends condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

Examples of good practice may include:

- Organising whole school assemblies or year group assemblies to discuss specific mental health or well-being issues
- Arranging for external visitors to discuss topical issues such as social media
- Using key dates such as Mental Health Awareness Week to promote Mental Health
- Organising activities to promote positive wellbeing across the curriculum
- Dedicating time to celebrate pupil's achievements
- Including well-being based activities within extra-curricular activities
- Using displays to signpost support and strategies

Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with policies for:

- Safe-guarding and Child Protection
- Personal, Social Health and Economic (PSHE) Education
- Online Safety
- Anti-bullying

Useful websites and places offering support

Thurrock Council Educational Psychology service and School Wellbeing service have created a support line for; children, their families, staff, young people.

01375 652537 or 01375 654558 email: sws@thurrock.gov.uk

[Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service for Schools](#)

The online link is accessible to all. It provides Southend, Essex and Thurrock Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Information for schools.

This Information portal is designed to support you in finding online material and content in supporting children and young people in educational settings.

[Thurrock Mind](#)

Tel: 01375 391411

Mind is able to offer counselling, Group work sessions, Drop-ins, Bereavement support as well as a variety of well-being activities.

[Inclusion Thurrock](#)

Tel: 01375 898680

This is a psychological therapy service and Recovery College for the over 18's. Inclusion Thurrock offers a simple gateway for those wanting to access talking.

[Young Minds](#)

Tel: 0808 802 5544

This is the UK's leading charity for children and young people's mental health. They can support families and schools as well as having a wealth of online resources to support in understanding different situations.

[Talk to Frank](#)

This website provides honest information about drugs and medicines.

SMS: 82111 – Need a quick answer? Text a question and FRANK will text you back.

[Papyrus](#)

Tel: 0800 068 4141

Papyrus provide confidential support and advice to young people struggling with thoughts of suicide, and anyone worried about a young person through our helpline.

[Child Line](#)

Tel: 0800 1111

Childline is a private and confidential service for children and young people up to 19. You can talk to a childline counsellor for free about any problem.

[Support for Carers](#)

For those caring for others this website explains your options and where to find support.

[Headspace](#)

An App and website exploring meditation

[Kooth](#)

Kooth, from XenZone, is an online counselling and emotional well-being platform for children and young people, accessible through mobile, tablet and desktop and free at the point of use.

[The Mix](#)

Tel: 0808 808 4994

Provides support for the under 25's with discussion boards, group chats, expert advice as well as counselling.