



# NCEA Grace Darling C of E Primary School

## Mental Health Policy

### Policy Preface

Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust is a Christian learning environment at the heart of its communities. We promote care and respect, and expect high standards in all aspects of our Trust life.

As a Church of England Academy Trust school, we aim to build communities clearly based on the Christian values of love, forgiveness and reconciliation, integrity and the unique value of each individual. We aim to build self-esteem, model conflict resolution, protect the weak and are committed to justice and compassion. Mutual respect and trust are central within the Academy Trust.

This policy, and its associated procedures and protocols, is based on these key principles.

<b>Lead Person:</b>	Headteachers
<b>Creation date:</b>	May 2022
<b>Version:</b>	1.0
<b>Last updated and approved:</b>	September 2022
<b>Latest edits</b> (please give brief overview)	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	September 2023
<b>Approved by:</b>	
<b>Statutory Requirement:</b>	No

Named mental health lead: Nina McGrath

Named Governor with lead on mental health: Jonathan Brady

## **1. How this Policy was developed**

This policy was written by the Headteachers and developed in consultation with the school Mental Health Action Group, teachers and other school staff, governors and the pupils. We have listened and responded to all views to help strengthen the policy, ensuring that it meets the needs of all of our pupils. Our Local Governing Body is aware that we have this policy in place.

In developing this policy we have taken account of:

- DFE Education Charter
- Children and Young People's Mental Health: State of the Nation 2016.
- Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing, Public Health England 2015.
- Preparing to teach about mental health, PSHE Association 2015.
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools, DfE 2014.
- Supporting children with medical conditions, DfE 2014.
- Equality Act 2010

## **2. Links to other policies**

This policy links to our policies:

- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Supporting Children with Medical Needs Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy
- PSHE (RSE) Policy

Links with the School's Behaviour Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need.

## **3. Purpose of the policy**

This policy sets out:

- How we promote positive mental health.
- How we prevent mental health problems.
- How we identify and support children with mental health needs.
- How we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent or address mental health problems
- Key information about some common mental health problems.
- Where parents, staff and children can get further advice and support.

## **4. Definition of mental health and wellbeing**

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing *“ 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”*.

Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children and staff to:

- feel confident in themselves.
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately.
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others.
- cope with the stresses of everyday life.
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change.
- learn and achieve.

## **5. Why mental health and wellbeing is important**

At Grace Darling C of E Primary, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health.

We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. All children go through ups and downs during their school career and some face significant life events.

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 develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and we offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting children's wellbeing and can help create a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that children and staff are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children and staff learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a school where:

- All children and staff are valued.
- Children and staff have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma.
- Adults can talk openly to line managers about their problems without feeling any stigma.
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued.
- Bullying is not tolerated.

## 6. A whole school approach to promoting positive mental health (A THRIVE APPROACH)

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help children and staff become more resilient, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise.

Thrive® promotes children's and young people's positive mental health by helping adults know how to be and what to do in response to their differing and sometimes distressed behaviour. Based on established neuroscience, attachment theory and child development, the Thrive Approach provides training to equip adults with the knowledge, insights and resources needed to develop the relationships that help children and young people to flourish and learn.

Our school follows the aspects below to promote a positive environment for children and staff:

- Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands-**Thrive**
- Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it- **zones of regulation/The Colour Monster**
- Helping children and staff to be resilient learners-**Growth Mindset Curriculum Strand**
- The social and emotional development of pupils is embedded throughout the entire school's curriculum and culture (See PSHE Policy for more details)
- Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
- Early identification of children who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services.
- Effectively working with parents and carers.
- Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues.

## 7. Staff roles and responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health and to understand protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff understand possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as: physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They should also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

### **Our Senior Mental Health Lead**

- Leads and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Promotes effective teaching of PSHE teaching about mental health.
- Provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates.
- Works alongside the SENDCO to ensure that children are directed to the correct services to support them with their mental health needs.

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to children with mental health needs and their families.

Sources of relevant support include:

- Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- School support staff employed to manage mental health needs of particular children
- The SENDCO helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including children whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.
- Thrive practitioner
- Speech and Language TAs

## **8. Identifying, referring and supporting children with mental health needs**

### **Our approach:**

- Provide a safe environment to enable children to express themselves and be listened to.
- Ensure the welfare and safety of children are paramount.
- Identify appropriate support for children based on their needs.
- Involve parents and carers when their child needs support.
- Involve children in the care and support they have.
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with children and keep parents and carers updated.

## **9. Control measures for possible workplace stressors for staff.**

Our school aims to minimise the risk of stress through a risk management process involving the identification, assessment and implementation of control measures to workplace stressors.

We aim to do the following:

### **a) Preventing stress**

Take stress prevention measures such as:

- Fostering a co-operative and supportive environment
- Ensuring good communications within teams
- Ensuring adequate preparation for new roles and responsibilities through risk assessment and training

- Enabling staff to report excessive workloads, interpersonal pressures and symptoms of stress without fear of discrimination
- Recognising early signs of stress in employees and taking action to provide appropriate intervention
- Supporting staff in recovering from stress-related illnesses and managing the return to work after any period of sick leave so that stress does not recur.

#### **b) Detecting and addressing stress**

- To take reasonable action to combat and prevent workplace stressors identified through risk assessment or those raised by members of staff
- To increase general awareness of stress and methods to prevent and combat harmful, excessive workplace stressors in various ways, including training and health promotion initiatives
- To assist staff in managing stress in others and themselves
- To manage problems that do occur and provide a safe environment for conversations.
- To manage the return to work of those who have been absent from work with stress related problems
- SLT takes appropriate advice from HR to support staff.

#### **c) Monitoring effectiveness**

- To manage the return to work of those who have been absent from work with stress related problems
- To review risk assessments in accordance with best practice so as to monitor risk management to prevent stress.
- To monitor, investigate and evaluate stress indicators, such as excessive sickness absence or high staff turnover

### **10. Working with specialist services to get swift access to the right specialist support and treatment**

- In some cases a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, self-harm and eating disorders.
- School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the SLT or the SENDCO following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents and carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the pupil and parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs.

### **11. SEND and mental health**

Persistent mental health problems may lead to children having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age. In some cases the child may benefit from being identified as having a special educational need.

### **12. Involving parents and carers**

#### **Promoting mental health**

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting children who have mental health needs.

- Our initial parent's meeting(EYFS) includes a discussion on the importance of positive mental health for learning.
- We ask parents to inform us of any mental health needs their child has and any issues that they think might have an impact on their child's mental health and wellbeing. It is very helpful if parents and carers can share information with the school so that we can better support their child from the outset.

### **Supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs.**

- We are sensitive and supportive. We reassure our families by explaining that mental health problems are common, that the school has experience of working with similar issues and that help and advice are available.
- We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs when requested.

### **13. Involving children**

- Every year we train up a group of children as our Health Champions who lead on whole school wellbeing.
- We seek pupil's views about our approach, curriculum and in promoting whole school mental health activities.
- We always seek feedback from children who have had support to help improve that support and the services they received.

### **14. Supporting and training staff**

- We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identify mental health needs early in children and know what to do and where to get help.
- Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing. Staff also have access to a counselling service.

### **15. Monitoring and Review**

- Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their professional development
- This policy will be reviewed by the Headteachers on an annual basis, who will make any necessary changes and communicate these to all members of staff.
- This policy will be made available for Ofsted inspections and review by the chief inspector, upon request.
- The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2022.

