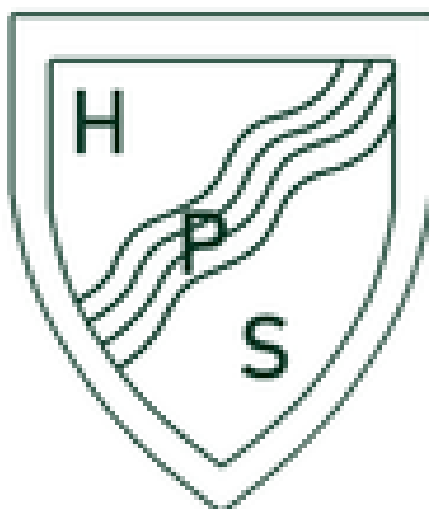


Halling Primary School



Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

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1.0 Policy Statement

At Halling Primary School, we are fully committed to supporting the mental health, emotional wellbeing and resilience of all our children, their families and staff. Our whole school approach is one that we hope is supportive, caring and respectful. We encourage not only our children to be open about their mental health and emotional wellbeing but also their families and our staff. Through the use of effective policies, frameworks and procedures, we aim to ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

The Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2021 statutory guidance outlines that schools have a significant role in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children. Here at Halling Primary School, we are proud to say that since 2021, our provision for mental health and wellbeing has enhanced and grown significantly. Recent research by the Mental Health Foundation shows that mental health problems affect about one to ten children and young people, and that one in five of those children will have a mental health issue by the time they are eleven. They include depression, anxiety and conduct disorder, and are often a direct response to what is happening in their lives. Statistics show that seventy percent of children who experience a mental health problem have not had support at an early age or the opportunity to build and develop upon their resilience. At Halling, we recognise the need to intervene early when mental health and emotional issues begin to emerge and to work with those children and their families to build upon their resilience.

A mentally healthy school is one that adopts a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. A school should help children to flourish, learn and succeed by providing opportunities to develop their coping skills and resilience. At Halling, we believe a mentally healthy school is one where every child, member of staff and family recognise wellbeing as 'everybody's business' and work together as a community and team.

At Halling, we have considered some of the key risk factors that could affect children's mental health, resilience and emotional wellbeing within our school community:

- Environmental factors - community and home environment
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Poverty
- Housing and financial pressure
- Divorce and separation
- Bereavement and loss
- Relationship breakdowns and overt parental conflict, including domestic violence
- Inconsistent or unclear discipline, rules or boundaries
- Failure to adapt to children's changing and developing needs
- Parental substance misuse
- Parental mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Bullying and discrimination
- Transition and major life events
- Traumatic events that a child has been exposed to
- Social media and peer pressure

2.0 Scope

This policy is a guide to all stakeholders and outlines Halling Primary School's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies such as, Safeguarding and Behaviour.

3.0 Policy Aims

- Adopt a whole school approach to mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all children, their families and staff
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill-health in children
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide the right support to children with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support
- Develop resilience amongst children and raise awareness of resilience-building techniques when coping with setbacks
- Encourage children to be confident and help to promote self-esteem and to develop a sense of self-worth
- Raise awareness amongst staff in recognising that some staff may have mental health issues
- Support staff struggling with their mental health and wellbeing
- Instil a culture of staff and child welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting, underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school
- Ensure children feel comfortable and safe, when sharing any worries or concerns
- Help children to form and maintain positive, healthy relationships
- Celebrate both academic and non-academic achievements
- Promote Halling's Core Values, encouraging a sense of belonging and community

4.0 Key Staff Members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children, however, key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Pastoral Lead
- Designated Safeguarding Leads
- SENDCo
- Mental Health First Aid Champion
- PSHE Coordinator
- Teaching and Support Staff

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child, in the first instance they should speak to the Pastoral Lead or a member of the Safeguarding Team.

If there is a concern that a child is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed. If the child presents a high-risk medical emergency, the relevant policy and procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services, if necessary.

5.0 Individual Care Plans

When a child has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue or, is receiving support through either CAMHS or another agency, it is recommended that an Individual Care Plan (ICP) is drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the child, parents/carers, and relevant professionals and include the following:

- Details of the child's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- The role of the school and specific members of staff

6.0 Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing

The skills, knowledge and understanding our children need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE (Jigsaw) and Safeguarding curriculum. Our whole school assemblies, nurture provision and our curriculum allows children to explore wider concepts such as, mental health and wellbeing.

7.0 Signposting

At Halling, we ensure that staff, children and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services. Within the school (noticeboards, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites and social media platforms), we share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events. The aim of this is to ensure children and their families understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why they should access it
- What is likely to happen next

8.0 Sources of Support at School and in the Local Community

- A Full time Pastoral Lead who coordinates whole-school emotional wellbeing provision
- Teaching assistants trained in delivering specific interventions such as social skills groups, 'Draw and Talk' and 'Lego Therapy'
- A Mental Health First Aid trained member of staff who is available Monday to Friday

- A curriculum that prioritises Mental Health and Wellbeing through PSHE (Jigsaw)
- Early identification of personal, social and emotional needs of our children
- Early Identification of universal support for our children and their families

Local Support

In Medway and Kent, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support, including the NELFT partnership - a group of providers specialising in children and young people's mental health wellbeing. These partners deliver accessible support to children, young people and their families, whilst working with professionals to reduce the range of mental health issues through prevention, intervention, training and participation. Early Help Services are accessible to all families within the community, offering access to universal support, which is relevant to individual needs.

9.0 Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs, which indicate a child 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 alert the Pastoral Lead or a member of the Safeguarding Team. Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of include:

- 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
- Change in 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, for example, long sleeves in warmer weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Avoiding/skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to and/or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

10.0 Targeted Support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing mental health and emotional wellbeing issues. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to NELFT, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence. For children at Halling Primary, we have considered what mental health and emotional wellbeing looks like for our children:

- Self-harm
- Risk-taking behaviours
- Derogatory language aimed towards themselves

- Expressing they want to die
- Low self-esteem/self-worth
- Struggling to access the curriculum due to behavioural needs
- Poor resilience

So what emotional wellbeing provision do we provide at Halling Primary School?

- A Full time Pastoral Lead who coordinates a whole-school emotional wellbeing provision
- A Peer Mentor Programme which aims to benefit children across the whole school, offering accessible and regular mindfulness, resilience and social skills opportunities at playtimes and lunchtimes
- Teaching assistants trained in delivering specific interventions such as social skills groups, 'Draw and Talk' and 'Lego Therapy'
- A Mental Health First Aid trained member of staff who is available Monday to Friday
- A curriculum that prioritises Mental Health and Wellbeing through PSHE (Jigsaw)
- Early identification of personal, social and emotional needs of our children
- Early Identification of universal support for our children and their families
- Workshops for parents/carers around emotional wellbeing and mental health

We ensure timely and effective identification of children who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to the most appropriate support service(s) by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems
- Working closely with universal services such as, Early Help
- Identifying and assessing children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective according to the child's needs such as, 'Emotional Literacy Support' or 'Draw and Talk'
- Ensuring young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, including NELFT, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be addressed as soon as they occur
- Providing young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns - any support offered takes account of local community and educational policies and protocols regarding confidentiality
- Providing young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it
- Identifying, assessing and supporting young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014

11.0 Managing Disclosures

If a child chooses to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. At Halling, all disclosures are recorded confidentially on the child's personal file on CPOMS including:

- Date
- Name of member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Nature of the disclosure and main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

12.0 Confidentiality

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a child to either someone within or outside of the school, then this will be first discussed with the child. 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

Ideally, consent should be gained from the child first, however, there may be instances when information must be shared, such as children up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a colleague, this ensures one single member of staff is not solely responsible for the child. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Parents/carers must always be informed, but children may choose to tell their parents/carers themselves. If this is the case, a timescale of 24 hours is recommended to share this information before the school contacts the parents/carers.

If a child gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, parents/carers should not be informed, but the child protection procedures should be followed.

13.0 Whole School Approach

Please see separate document: A whole school approach to Resilience, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

13.1 Working with Parents and Carers

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents/carers, there are questions to consider first:

- Can we meet with the parents/carers face-to-face?
- Where should the meeting take place? Some parents/carers are uncomfortable on the school premises so, if appropriate, a neutral venue is considered
- Who should be present: children, staff, parents/carers etc.?
- What are the aims of the meeting and intended outcomes?

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

Signposting parents/carers to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication should be kept open should the parents/carers have further questions or concerns. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone could be beneficial at this stage.

At Halling, we ensure a record of the meeting and points discussed/agreed are added to the child's CPOMs record and an Individual Care Plan is created, if appropriate.

13.2 Supporting Parent and Carers

At Halling, we recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing. We work in partnership with parents/carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents/carers are aware of and have access to promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.);
- Offering support to help parents/carers develop their parenting skills – this may involve providing information or offering small, group-based programmes run by our Pastoral Lead
- Ensuring parents/carers and other family members living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing. This will include support to participate in any parenting sessions, by offering a range of times for the sessions or providing help with transport and childcare. We recognise this might involve liaison with family support agencies.

14.0 Supporting Peers

When a child is suffering from mental health issues or emotional wellbeing issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case-by-case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one-to-one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the child who is suffering and their parents/carers 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 or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend needs help, for example, 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

15.0 Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health and emotional wellbeing issues as part of their regular child protection training to enable them to keep children 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 to developing situations with one or more children.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health and emotional wellbeing.

16.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of the Pastoral Lead and/or Head Teacher.