# Mental Health Policy

# FOREST VIEW SCHOOL

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**Policy Statement**

At Forest View Primary School, we are committed to supporting the positive mental health and wellbeing of our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers). We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued. We endeavour to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress and aim to ensure that they are supported to reach their potential or to access help when they need it.

We also have a role to ensure that children 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.

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.

**Teaching about mental health**

At Forest View Primary School we take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health, aiming to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to work in a pro-active way to avoid problems arising.

We do this by:

- Creating and applying consistent ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and well-being.
- Adhering to a positive, relationship focussed approach to behaviour management.
- Helping children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- Helping children to feel comfortable about sharing any concerns or worries.
- Teaching children emotional skills and an awareness of mental health so that they understand their emotions and feelings better.
- Promoting self-esteem and ensuring children understand their importance in the world.
- Helping children to be resilient learners and to manage setbacks.
- Identifying children who have mental health challenges and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services, parents and carers.
- Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.
- Developing an open culture where it's normal to talk about mental health.

**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.
- Enabling access to appropriate support.
- Mental Health and PSHE for all year groups

**We pursue our aims through:**

- Universal, whole school approaches – Steps to support (a tiered system)
- Support for pupils going through difficulties, including bereavement.
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties.
- Intervention groups to focus on mental health, resilience and wellbeing.
- Referrals to specialist services when necessary

**Staff roles and responsibilities**

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

**Key staff supporting Mental Health at Forest View Primary School**

Named Mental Health Lead – Jemma Woskett (Deputy Head Teacher)
Deputy Mental Health Lead – Gemma Lyons (Inclusion Manager)
Key Mental Health Staff (Pastoral Team) – Kevin Law-Eadie (Pastoral Support Worker), Michelle Ennis (Family Support Worker EYFS), Sarah Anderson (attendance officer and ELSA) Named Mental Health Governor – Sandie Roper

**Our Mental Health Leads:**

- Lead and work with all staff to co-ordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Work with the PSHE leader re: teaching about mental health.
- Provide advice and support to staff and organise training and updates.
- Liaise with mental health services and makes individual referrals to them.

**Teaching about Mental Health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but we will also use the GHLL Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

**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 GHLL resources.
- Managing feelings resources e.g. 'worry boxes' and 'worry eaters'.
- Managing emotions resources.
- Primary Group Work/Mental health and wellbeing groups/ELSA support groups.
- Therapeutic activities including art, lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques.
- Using specialist services

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

- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire
- The Boxall Profile
- Emotional literacy scales 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.

**Early Identification and Warning Signs**

All staff will be vigilant in identifying a range of possible difficulties that may be contributing to a pupil's poor mental health, including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstance
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil 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. Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

**Assessment, interventions and support**

All concerns will follow the 'Steps to Pastoral Support at Forest View'. The designated adults within school assess the child's needs through a triage approach with Class Teachers, Teaching Assistants, the Pastoral Team and Inclusion Manager to ensure the child gets the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service, as quickly as possible.

**Working with parents and carers**

Parents or carers can approach their child/children's class teacher if they have mental health concerns. This will be cascaded to the Mental Health Team for assessment.

**To support parents and carers we will:**

- Provide information online on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- Share ideas about how parents and carers can support positive mental health in their children.
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics taught in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this at home.
- Organise workshops and presentations on mental health, anxiety, resilience and steps to wellbeing.

**When a concern has been raised, teachers or the Mental Health Lead or Inclusion Manager will:**

- Contact parents to discuss the outcome of any assessment (although there may be cases, parents and carers cannot be involved due to child protection issues).
- Discuss any relevant referrals to external agencies.
- Signpost parents to further information or provide resources to take away.
- Discuss how parents can support their child through strategies or signposts to parenting support groups.

**Working with specialist services**

As part of our targeted provision, the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing. Children may be referred to one of the following services for additional support:

- Educational Psychology Services
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- School Nursing Service
- Children's and Family Services
- YMM
- Family support workers
- TIC+

A full range of services and interventions can be found in our Pastoral Support Document.

**Training**

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

All GHLL training and additional CPD will be offered to staff.

**Links to other policies**

This policy links to our Child Protection Policy, Anti Bullying, SEND Offer, Staff Wellbeing Policy and our Behaviour Policy.