



MENTAL HEALTH & EMOTIONAL WELLBEING POLICY

Policy statement

At The Leys Primary School we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of all members of the school community and place wellbeing and mental health at the heart of decision making.

We strive to maintain a supportive & caring culture and ethos. Our approach is one of respect and kindness where each individual is respected, valued and listened to.

We acknowledge and appreciate that everyone experiences challenges in life and this can make us vulnerable, at times and anyone may need additional emotional support. We recognise that this is even more likely following the COVID pandemic, which has both caused and exacerbated previously well managed mental health needs.

Positive mental health is everybody's business and we all have a role to play in ensuring a safe and supported environment for those in need of extra support.

Scope

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies particularly but not exclusively the following:

- Child Protection policy
- Pupil Wellbeing & Behaviour for learning
- Access & Equalities policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- PSHE policy
- Medical policies
- SEND local offer document

Lead Staff

Whilst **ALL** staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health, staff with a specific remit include:-

- Davinder Khangura - Headteacher - Deputy safeguarding lead
- Alison Barr - Deputy Headteacher- Deputy safeguarding lead - Designated Teacher for Children Looked After - SEND lead - Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Lead
- Suzanne Harris - SEND teacher - Deputy safeguarding lead



- Sally Clibbon - Family Worker - Designated safeguarding lead - Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing lead
- Hayley Sherwood - Mental Health Governor

Aims

- Help pupils to understand their emotions and feelings more clearly
- Help pupils to feel comfortable sharing worries/concerns
- Help pupils to form and maintain positive relationships
- Promote self-esteem and ensure pupils know their views count
- Encourage pupils to be confident and able to be themselves
- Help pupils to develop emotional resilience & manage setbacks
- To support parents and staff with advice, training and information regarding accessing additional help in order to support their own and to manage the mental health needs of children in their care.

We aim to promote a mentally healthy environment by

- Encouraging a sense of belonging for all groups of children, but especially those for whom being part of a school setting can be more challenging, for example those with SEND needs, CLA or young carers.
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision making
- Celebrating all achievements - academic and non-academic
- Providing the opportunity to take responsibility to promote self-worth
- Encouraging time to reflect and talk
- Accessing appropriate support for specific needs

These aims are pursued through

- Universal, whole-school approaches
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties
- Specialised, targeted approaches for pupils with more complex family or longer-term personal difficulties

Teaching about positive mental health

Understanding and knowledge needed by pupils to keep themselves mentally healthy are included in our PSHE curriculum, underpinned by the 5 ways to wellbeing.

Specific content of lessons are determined by the identified needs of the cohort. Mental Health and emotional wellbeing issues will be taught in a safe and sensitive manner.



Targeted support

At The Leys we will offer support and targeted approaches for both individuals and groups of pupils - this may include the use of the following

- circle time approaches or 'circle of friends'
- managing feelings resources (worry boxes, Stress Bucket tool)
- managing emotions resources such as 'zones of regulation'
- specialised therapeutic activities - art, counselling & play therapy.

School will make use of resources available to assess and track wellbeing as and when appropriate

- Strengths and difficulties questionnaire
- Boxall profile
- Emotional literacy scales (i.e. Scott-Miller outcome scales)
- Whole school wellbeing questionnaires
- Pupil voice, especially through Wellbeing Champion meetings

Identifying needs

There are weekly meetings held between the headteacher, mental health leads and SEND teacher, to discuss identified vulnerable pupils.

School staff who become aware of warning signs about the mental health of a pupil will discuss their concerns with either a Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Mental Health Lead as appropriate.

Parents and carers are also encouraged to discuss concerns with the class teacher and/or mental health leads.

Possible warning signs could include

- reported changes in eating/sleeping habits
- social withdrawal
- sudden changes in mood
- talk about self harm or suicide
- scratching, hitting, picking, cutting, pulling hair or other physical forms of self harm
- speaking about the loss of hope, failure or uselessness
- reporting physical pain or nausea with no obvious cause
- deterioration in attendance or punctuality



- risky behaviours, such as intentionally running into the road or swallowing harmful substances

Confidentiality

Staff are encouraged to discuss new or serious concerns with the lead staff quickly but can also monitor ongoing concerns using the mental health tag on Cpoms. It may be necessary to share concerns about a pupil with members of staff outside the Mental Health team. This will be handled in a sensitive way and wherever possible consent from the pupil will be obtained. The privacy of a pupil and their family should be respected as far as possible but Child Protection procedure should be considered paramount and may override this.

Signposting and working with parents

We aim to work alongside parents to support a pupil with Mental Health issues and in order to facilitate this we will;

- share information about mental health topics being covered in lessons
- promote ideas about how parents can support positive mental health through the newsletter and school website
- ensure parents are aware of who to talk to if they have concerns
- highlight sources of information and support which are available for parents to access

The Leys School employs a Family Liaison Worker to support and advise families and to signpost them to further help and support if necessary.

Working with other agencies

As part of The Leys mental health provision, the school will work with other agencies and partners to support pupil wellbeing and emotional health. These can include

- school nursing service and health visitors
- educational psychology services
- behaviour support - tiered service through DSPL2, Willows, Larwood outreach and NESSIE
- paediatricians
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- specialist therapies which could include counselling, play therapy or art therapy
- Intensive Families First Support Team
- domestic abuse support agencies
- Young Carers support



- Family Centres
- Stevenage Mental Health Team

Training & Development

Staff identified in the Mental Health Lead role will have been trained to either Level 2 Mental Health Leads training or the nationally accredited Mental Health First Aid training.

All staff in school to be trained in Herts Steps (Step On level) and Level 1 in Mental Health.

Staff are signposted to the MindEd learning portal and The National College - which provides on-line training for staff around specifically identified issues.

Training opportunities will be made available as part of performance management reviews, where appropriate, and additional CPD supported when identified.

Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing

Our staff are a critical resource, and their own wellbeing and mental health is an important factor in the support and wellbeing of the children in their care.

The governors and leadership team will support staff to make positive choices for their own and that of their colleagues wellbeing and mental health, through opportunities for flexible working, promoting diversity, considering workload, supporting clear and timely communication, listening to staff views when making decisions and by providing a safe, calm and supportive environment for staff to work in.

Sometimes supporting a child or parent with mental health needs can be a very difficult or distressing task. It is therefore important that staff recognise their own feelings and have access to support to help them in times of need. The School is part of the 'School's Advisory Service' which provides free access to confidential medical support (including nurses, physiotherapy and occupational therapy) and counselling professionals, alongside support with exercise, weight loss, men/women's health and wellbeing advice. Support can be accessed through their website, app or by phoning 01773 814403.

Education Support is a national organisation that also provides support, guidance, information and a confidential helpline for teachers and those that work in schools.

They can be reached on <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/> or 0800 562561

Policy review and updates

This policy will be reviewed in Autumn 2023.