Mental Health Policy

The Old School Henstead

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| Written by: | WJM/Reviewed by EG (November 2024) |
| **Version** | 1 |

At The Old School Henstead, we are committed to supporting the positive mental health and wellbeing of our whole school community (children, staff, parents, and carers). We recognize that mental health and emotional wellbeing is as important to our lives as physical health.

We endeavor to ensure that children can manage times of change and stress. We aim to ensure that they are supported to reach their potential or access help if 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 reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and what they can do if they need help and support.

Links to other policies.

This policy links to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, Child on Child Abuse Policy, SEND Policy, and Behaviour Policy.

Teaching about mental health

We adopt a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health, aiming to help children become more resilient, happy, 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 resilience, and which everyone understands.
* Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.
* Promoting self-esteem and ensuring children understand their importance.
* Helping children to be resilient learners and to manage setbacks.
* Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
* Identifying children who have mental health challenges and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services, parents, and carers.
* Support for staff to develop their skills and own resilience.
* Developing an open culture where it is normal to talk about mental health.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

* Promoting our school values and encourage a sense of belonging.
* Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making.
* Celebrating all achievements in school, both academic and non-academic.
* Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others.
* Providing opportunities to reflect, particularly during collective worship.
* Enabling access to appropriate support.
* Assemblies, PSHE, RSE and RHE

Staff roles

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to promote this in and out of their classrooms.

We endeavor to provide a healthy, happy working environment.

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health and to understand the protective and risk factors for mental health. Staff are encouraged to raise concerns with members of SLT if they have concerns about the mental health and wellbeing of a child or a colleague. Such conversations are managed with great sensitivity.

Some children may require additional help. Referrals to key agencies will be made, if necessary, in order that children receive the intervention they need.

Named Mental Health Lead – Mrs D Sonn

Named Mental Health Governor- Mr Alex Son

Our mental health leads

* Work with staff to co-ordinate whole school initiatives to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
* Works with the leads of PSHE, RSE RE, form teachers and the headmaster.

Early identification

We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to try to prevent escalations of need.

Staff are aware to look out for changes in patterns of behaviour which may indicate a child is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. Teaching and support staff are responsible for reporting concerns about individual children to designated adults within school.

**Possible changes in behaviour:**

Attendance

Punctuality

Relationships

Approach to learning

Physical indicators

Negative behaviour patterns

Family circumstance

Recent bereavement

Health indicators (weight loss/ gain etc.)

**Possible warning signs include**

Changes in sleeping/ eating habits

Becoming socially withdrawn

Changes in activity/ mood

Talking about self-harm/ 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 are reported to the designated adults within school and needs are assessed through conversations with parents and staff. If there are concerns, processes are started to gain the support that the child needs. This could be either from within the school’s own resources or from an external specialist service.

Collaborating with parents and carers

* Make policies easily accessible to parents.
* Parents are encouraged to speak with school to discuss any concerns about their child’s wellbeing.

Collaborating with specialist services

As part of our targeted provision the school may work with other agencies to support the children’s emotional health and wellbeing. A child might be referred (with parental permission) to one of the following services for additional support.

* CAMHS (Child and Adolescents Mental Health Service)
* Therapist
* Educational Psychology Service
* Early Help (Suffolk Early Help Service is made up of teams of practitioners who work with families who have unmet needs which are not being met by other support.)
* Counselling Service (such as a bereavement service)