

Middlestown Primary Academy



Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Date reviewed: June 2021

Date to be reviewed: June 2024

1. Policy Statement

At Middlestown Primary Academy, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued.

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 mental health is just as important as physical health and that we all have a role to play.

At our school we:

- Help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
- Help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- Help children socially to form and maintain friendships
- Promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they are important
- Encourage children to be confident
- Help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks

We promote a mentally health 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
- Access to appropriate support that meets their needs

We pursue our aims through:

- Universal, whole school approaches
- Support for children going through recent difficulties, including bereavement
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at children with more complex or long-term difficulties

2. Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. The policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a child's mental health overlaps with, or is linked to, a medical issue and the SEND policy where a student has an identified special educational need. This policy should also be read in conjunction with our PSHCE and RSE policies.

3. Teaching about mental health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our children to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHCE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort being taught but there will always be an emphasis on enabling children to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves and others.

At Middlestown Primary Academy, we follow the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

4. Lead members of staff

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

- Mrs Young – Headteacher and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Mrs Ashcroft – SENDCo and Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Mrs Asquith – Mental Health First Aider and PSHCE Lead
- Miss Rooke – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Mrs Smith – Mental Health First Aider
- Mrs Murphy – Mental Health First Aider

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child should speak to a Mental Health First Aider in the first instance. If there is a fear that the child is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Headteacher. If the child presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Mrs Ashcroft.

5. Support for children

Middlestown Primary Academy offer support through targeted approaches for individual children or groups of children which may include:

- Circle time approaches
- Targeted use of PSHCE resources
- Managing feelings resources, e.g. 'worry boxes' and 'worry gobbler'
- Therapeutic activities including art, lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques

6. 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 communicate their concerns to Mrs Asquith or Mrs Smith, our Mental Health First Aiders.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental

- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity or mood
- Lowering of 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 clothes – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

7. Confidentiality

We should be honest with regard to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a child on, then we should discuss with the child:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Mental Health First Aiders. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the child and it ensures continuity of care in our absence. Parents must always be kept informed and contacted at the earliest convenience.

8. Working with parents

In order to support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to and how to contact external agencies if they have concerns about their child
- Make our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing policy easily accessible to them
- Share ideas about how they can support positive mental health in their children
- Keep them informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this at home

9. Working with other agencies and partners

As part of our targeted provision, the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing, including:

- Educational Psychology services
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Therapists

10. Monitoring and Reviewing

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum.

This policy was reviewed and updated on **July 2021**

By _____ (Headteacher's signature)

By _____ (Chair of governors' signature)

Next review date: **July 2024**