



## Pupil Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

September 2023

### Policy Statement

At Newlands Junior School, we are committed to supporting and promoting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils, their families, members of staff and governors. We have a supportive and caring ethos, our approach is respectful, and kind, where our open culture allows all voices to be heard and all contributions are 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 positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play. All of this ensures that our school is a safe, supportive environment for all participants.

At our school we:

- Help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
- Create an atmosphere where children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- Support children socially to form and maintain relationships
- Promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count
- Support and encourage children to embrace and be proud of their uniqueness
- Encourage children to be confident and 'dare to be different'
- Enable children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks

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
- Access to appropriate support that meets their needs

We pursue our aims through:

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

## **Scope**

This policy is a guide to all staff, including non-teaching and governors, outlining Newlands Junior School's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with our Medical policy and our SEND policy, in cases where pupils mental health needs overlap with these. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for Behaviour, Anti-bullying and Citizenship. It should also sit alongside child protection procedures.

## **Policy Aims**

- To promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and pupils
- To increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- To enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in pupils
- To enable all staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues
- To provide the right support to pupils with mental health issues and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support
- To develop resilience amongst pupils and raise awareness of resilience-building techniques
- To raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SLT that staff may have mental health issues and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing (see Staff Wellbeing Policy); instilling a culture of staff and pupil welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school

## **Lead Members of Staff**

This policy aims to ensure that all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (Alison Castledine)
- SENCO/Pastoral/Family Support Worker (Karen Elliott)
- Citizenship Coordinator (Clare Boulton)
- Senior Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead (Karen Elliott)

## **Individual Care Plans**

When a pupil 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 organisation, it is recommended that an Individual Care Plan should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents and relevant professionals.

Suggested elements of the plan include:

- Details of the pupil'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 staff

## **Teaching about Mental Health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our Citizenship and RSE curriculum. The content of lessons are determined by the specific needs of the cohort being taught, but we will also use the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner. Additionally, we will use lessons as a vehicle for providing pupils who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting pupils to support any of their friends who are facing challenges.

## **Signposting**

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support. Within the school (noticeboard in reception, staff room, displays around school) and through our communication channels (website, Facebook, newsletters, text messages, Marvellous Me) we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events. The aim is to ensure our pupils 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

## **Identifying needs and Warning Signs**

All staff complete CPOMs daily, recording any causes for concern and alerting members of the SLT to these. CPOMs is also analysed by the SLT weekly, to ensure early identification of pupils who are struggling for whatever reason to allow for support to be put in place at the first identification of a range of possible difficulties including:

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

These are colour coded to aid identification.

School staff may also become aware of warning signs, which indicate a student 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 or joking 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
- Avoiding physical activity or getting changed secretly/wearing long sleeves in hot weather

## **Working with and supporting parents**

In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website
- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g. through parent forums.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their child.
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children
- Offer support to help parents or carers to develop their parenting skills
- Ensure that parents/carers living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing. This may include liaising with family support agencies
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in Citizenship and RSE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

If the need arises to inform parents/carers of concerns relating to their child's mental health and/or wellbeing, as a school we are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore react in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent/carer to reflect and come to terms with the situation. It is important that parents/carers are signposted in the right direction during the meeting and that lines of communication are kept open should the parents/carers have subsequent questions or concerns.

## **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:

- The school nurse
- Educational psychology services
- Behaviour support
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Therapists
- Each Amazing Breath

## **Targeted support**

We recognise that some children are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health, for example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We work closely with a number of outside agencies/organisations in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of school-aged children and are equipped to work at community, family and individual levels. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating.

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 SEAL resources
- Managing feelings groups
- Managing emotions groups
- Mental health and wellbeing groups/daily check ins
- Nurture groups
- ELSA support groups
- Drawing and Talking sessions
- Therapeutic activities including art, lego, play therapy, relaxation (music) and mindfulness techniques
- Take 5 daily breathing

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

- Boxall Profile
- Emotional Literacy
- Motional

### **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 students safe. The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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 pupils.