



Asterdale Primary School

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

'Together We Can...'
Be confident, Be excellent, Nurture, Build

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We as a school consider our equality duties under the Equality act 2010. The general duties are to: -

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

This policy understands the principle of the Act and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equality of opportunity.

Policy Statement

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

We know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, and that anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

At Asterdale 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 relationships
- promote self-esteem
- encourage children to be confident
- help children to develop emotional resilience and give them skills to manage setback
- help the children to develop a holistic view to maintaining good health, both physically and mentally.

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 in school
- Celebrating both 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
- Specialised support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement or family separation/divorce.
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long term difficulties including attachment disorder

Scope

This policy 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, PSHE, RSHE and SMSC policies. Mental health also sits very much alongside safeguarding procedures.

Lead Members of Staff

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

Mr David Evans – Designated Safeguarding Lead

Miss K. Knowles - Designated Senior Lead in Mental Health and Wellbeing
Adult mental health first aider
Youth/child mental health first aider
PSHE lead.

Mrs A. Harrold - Learning Mentor
Youth/child mental health first aider

Mrs J. McCormick – SENCO

All class teachers teach PSHE JIGSAW lessons.

Universal Support

Teaching about Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included in our PSHE scheme of work **JIGSAW**.

JIGSAW is taught as a scheme of work throughout the whole school, from Nursery to Year 6.

Sequential and progressive lessons are taught weekly in a safe and sensitive manner. Additional lessons are sometimes planned, in response to the specific needs of the class/cohort.

Children in Nursery and Reception are taught **JIGSAW** alongside the PSED area of learning in the of the EYFS. Each half termly **JIGSAW** focus theme is introduced in assembly in whole school assembly sessions.

Additional Support

Additional support is provided for pupils who may have short-term needs and those who may have been made vulnerable by life experiences such as bereavement or trauma.

Targeted support

The school offers support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- 'Meet and Greet' for pupils that need support with the transition from home to school
- Dedicated Learning Mentor time
- Creative expression sessions

- Wellbeing and self-esteem groups
- Personalised support following 'Wishes and Feelings' assessments
- Personalised support for children in care
- Nurture provision groups
- Resources to help express and manage emotions
- Therapeutic activities
- Support with behaviour
- Support for LGBTQI + pupils
- Sensory activities
- Wellbeing buddy/peer support
- Lego therapy
- A selection of books based on emotions and mental health for all ages

In addition we complete wellbeing assessments at transition periods – The Three House Templates. (<https://www.socialworkerstoolbox.com/the-three-houses-template/>) Familiar staff have informal discussions with pupils about what they have shared. Follow up sessions are arranged with Mental Health First Aiders as needed.

Pupils identify and talk about their emotions and how they are feeling in relation to 'The Colour Monster' story book on a daily basis. 'Emotion check in' sessions are also regularly held. All pupils across school indicate how they are feeling on a given day. Follow up chats are used where needed and possible concerns are shared with class teachers.

We provide a 'safe space' for children in the event of emotional break down or distress.

We have dedicated wellbeing buddies in every class in school. They are nominated by the class teacher/peers and provide friendship and support to peers across key stage groups. The year six buddies are trained for their role and they then complete peer on peer training for other wellbeing buddies across the school. We also have a designated wellbeing representative in Asterdale School Council. Termly 'catch up' meetings are held with the Year 6 wellbeing buddy and wellbeing representative with the DSLMH.

Signposting

We ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support. We also signpost to local and national support systems. Identifying needs and Warning Signs

When school staff become aware of signs which may indicate that a pupil may be experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues, they communicate their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Mental Health Lead.

Possible warning signs include:

- Irregular attendance and punctuality
- Change in academic progress
- Behaviour that may be erratic or very different to usual
- Changes in activity and mood
- Physical health deteriorating

- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- Over/under eating
- Soiling
- Self-harm/talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Becoming socially withdrawn/isolating themselves
- Hiding inside clothes (making themselves invisible)
- Attention seeking
- No empathy
- Compulsive lying
- Anxiety

Working with Parents

In order to support parents we:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.
- Remind parents where they can access sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing for themselves, their children or family members.
- Encourage families to participate in enrichment and knowledge occasions.
- Provide an open door policy and 'drop in' sessions with the Mental Health team
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their child
- Host workshops for parents
- Run parent/child after school clubs
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home through Class Dojo posts and newsletters
- Have a school community designated mental health and wellbeing Facebook page.
- Drop in sessions are available to parents/carers throughout the year.

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
- Pediatricians
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services

- Family support workers
- Social workers
- Odyssey Academy Trust Champions for mental health and wellbeing
- Occupational Health

Training and other support systems

Staff receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular safeguarding training in order to enable them to keep students safe, as well as information about the range of services available to support children and families facing mental health challenges.

The DSLMH and the Learning Mentor are the Youth Mental Health First Aiders and adult mental health first aiders in school.

The DSLMH is an Odyssey Collaborative Trust Champion for Mental Health and Wellbeing. They are also on the Education Board for the Anna Freud Centre, regularly meeting with other professionals in the UK.

The National College learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue. <https://nationalcollege.com>

Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge are considered as part of performance management processes and additional CPD is supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more pupils.

Staff Support

Asterdale Primary recognise that the staff are their most important resource and are to be valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally within a learning, nurturing and caring school community.

The Head teacher, S.L.T. and Governing Body are committed to ensuring that the school practices support staff health and wellbeing, to minimise the harm from stress and ensure that there is cohesion and progress in working towards the health and wellbeing of all staff.

The Head teacher, S.L.T. and Governing Body will: -

- Have a school ethos where all staff are valued and where respect, empathy and honesty are the cornerstones of all school relationships
- Ensure that decision making processes are clearly shared
- Consult on training and support needs through regular review
- Provide personal and professional development
- Support new staff with an appropriate level of induction
- Provide a programme of support for staff new to a role
- Provide support and dedicated management time for all Phase Leaders
- Provide support and dedicated leadership time for all Subject Leaders
- Operate Performance Management linked to clear job specifications
- Provide extra support from the Head teacher and SLT at certain times of particular challenge and/ or difficulty
- Provide a non-judgmental and confidential support system
- Promote information about and access to supportive services
- Respond sensitively and flexibly to external pressures that impact on staff lives

whilst at the same time ensuring the efficient running of the school

- Maintain contact with staff when they are absent for long periods (by a named person)
- Review work life balance regularly and take action
(Actions already taken include: additional PPA time for forward planning, regular dedicated non-contact time for Subject Leadership, meetings and after school events kept to a minimum, admin tasks linked to Teaching and Learning undertaken by Admin Team)
- Regularly discuss mental health and wellbeing.
- Mental health and wellbeing is on the agenda and discussed at every full Governors meeting.
- Provide a 'safe space' for adults
- Support with Occupational Health appointments as needed.

All staff can also access free, confidential support through the **Employee Assistance Programme**.

Roles and Responsibilities

The promotion of Mental Health and Well-being is the responsibility of the whole school staff and governors. The government guidance for schools recommends that the Senior Mental Health Lead works very closely with your leadership team and has their support to influence strategic change and embed mental health and wellbeing into the culture of schools. The Designated Senior Lead for Mental Health and Wellbeing (DSL MH) raises awareness and increases capacity so that mental health and wellbeing is something that the whole school community contributes to. Our DSL MH also specifically supports members of the school community with bereavement and grief. The Governing Board has adopted this policy and will assess and monitor its impact annually

