The Federation of Winklebury Infant and Junior Schools

Willoughby Way, Basingstoke RG23 8AF
Website: https://www.winkleburyfederation.co.uk/
Telephone: 01256 323244

Headteacher: Mrs K Bartlett

Believe, Strive, Achieve

Wellbeing Policy

Date policy produced/reviewed: 05.09.26

Policy produced/reviewed by: Headteacher

Ratified by the governing body: 17.09.26

Signed:

Position:

Date of next review: Sept 2029

Wellbeing Policy

Mental Health Lead – Miss H Walker

Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. (World Health Organization)

Rationale
At Winklebury Infant and Junior Schools, our school vision and values shape all we do. As part of this, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our school community, including all children, staff, governors, parents and carers. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable individuals. We believe that positive mental health is vital to ensuring that every individual reaches their full potential.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures, we can promote a safe and stable environment for children affected both directly, and indirectly, by mental health and wellbeing issues.

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all members of our community including staff, governors and parents and carers.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our:
- Child protection policy,
- Safeguarding policy,
- Relationship and Behaviour policy,
- Inclusion and SEND policy,
- First Aid policy,
- Supporting children with medical conditions policy,
- PSHCE policy.

Aims
Through our whole school approach to wellbeing, we aim to:
- ensure all children are happy and safe;
- ensure all children have a safe adult they can turn to if needed;
- promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all members of the school community including children, staff, governors, parents and carers;
- increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues;
- alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing;
- provide support to staff working with children with mental health and wellbeing issues;
- provide support to children suffering poor mental health and their peers and parents/carers.

Thrive
As a Thrive School, we recognise that children's emotional wellbeing is fundamental to their ability to learn, develop positive relationships and achieve their full potential. Thrive is a whole-school approach that supports the social and emotional development of all children through understanding their individual needs and building strong, positive relationships.

The Thrive approach is underpinned by current research in child development, neuroscience and attachment theory. It helps us understand the reasons behind a child's behaviour and enables us to respond in a supportive, relational and trauma-informed way. Rather than focusing solely on behaviour, we seek to understand what a child may be communicating through their actions and to identify the support they need to feel safe, secure and successful.
Through Thrive, we aim to:
- promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing for all children;
- develop children's emotional resilience, self-esteem and confidence;
- create a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where every child feels valued and understood;
- support children to recognise, understand and regulate their emotions;
- build secure relationships between children and adults;

- identify and respond to social and emotional needs at the earliest opportunity;
- reduce barriers to learning by supporting children's emotional development.

All staff are committed to using a relational approach and understand the importance of connection, consistency and co-regulation in supporting wellbeing. Daily interactions, classroom practice and behaviour support are informed by Thrive principles and seek to promote a sense of belonging for every child.

Where additional support is required, children may participate in targeted Thrive sessions delivered by trained practitioners. These sessions are tailored to individual needs and focus on developing emotional regulation, social skills, confidence and resilience. Progress is monitored carefully, and parents and carers are involved where appropriate to ensure a joined-up approach to supporting children's wellbeing.

By embedding Thrive throughout school life, we aim to ensure that every child feels safe, supported and ready to learn, enabling them to flourish both emotionally and academically.

The Curriculum

We believe in the importance of children understanding that their mental health and wellbeing is just as important as their physical health, and we will always talk openly and honestly with children about mental health and wellbeing. The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our children, to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe, form an integral part of our PSHCE programme. 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 or others.

In order to support children' understanding of mental health, we introduce children to a range of different strategies they can use when feeling anxious, worried, frustrated or even angry, in order to help improve wellbeing. Initially teachers identify when this is needed and model the process for the children. As children mature we encourage them to take more responsibility for their own wellbeing, to identify which strategies are most effective for them and to identify when they would benefit from wellbeing time.

Zones of Regulation

We use the Zones of Regulation as part of our relational approach to understanding and supporting behaviour. The Zones of Regulation framework helps children recognise and label their emotions, understand how these feelings influence their actions and develop strategies to regulate themselves in positive and appropriate ways. Through integrating the Zones of Regulation into our daily practice and teaching emotional awareness and self-regulation explicitly, we empower children to take ownership of their behaviour while feeling understood and supported. All staff use the Zones of Regulation framework as a tool to:

- help children identify their feelings and triggers,
- co-regulate and guide them towards calmer states,
- teach them language to talk about emotions and behaviour,

Using this shared approach creates consistency and predictability, helping children feel more in control of their own emotional and behavioural responses and fostering a calm, inclusive environment where all children can learn, feel safe, and thrive.

MyHappymind

We use the myHappymind programme to teach children about the different parts of the brain using scientific names, helping them to understand how their brain works and how this affects their thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Through this knowledge, children learn that emotions are natural and manageable, and that they have the power to influence their own responses. As part of myHappymind, children are taught Happy Breathing — a simple and effective technique that helps them to calm their bodies and minds when feeling dysregulated. Embedding Happy Breathing into daily routines promotes emotional awareness, self-regulation and supports children in developing the skills needed to manage their emotions appropriately, ensuring they are ready to learn.

ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant)

At Winklebury Infant and Junior Schools, we recognise that some children may require additional support to develop their emotional literacy, resilience and social skills. Our Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) provision complements our whole-school approach to wellbeing by providing targeted interventions for children experiencing temporary or longer-term emotional barriers to learning.

ELSA is a nationally recognised programme developed by Educational Psychologists. It is designed to support children in understanding and managing their emotions, developing positive relationships and building the confidence needed to

engage successfully in school life. ELSA interventions are delivered by trained members of staff under the supervision of an Educational Psychologist.
ELSA support may help children with:

- recognising and understanding emotions;
- managing feelings such as anxiety, anger or sadness;
- developing self-esteem and confidence;
- building and maintaining friendships;
- social and communication skills;
- managing change, loss or bereavement;
- developing resilience and problem-solving skills;
- coping with difficult experiences and transitions.

Children are identified for ELSA support through discussions between school staff, parents and carers, and where appropriate, the child themselves. Sessions are tailored to meet individual needs and provide a safe, supportive environment where children can explore their thoughts and feelings through conversation, activities and therapeutic play.

ELSA does not replace specialist mental health services or counselling. Instead, it provides early intervention and emotional support that can help children develop the skills and strategies needed to manage everyday challenges and maximise their potential both socially and academically.

Nurture Groups
We recognise that some children benefit from additional opportunities to develop their social, emotional and communication skills within a smaller, supportive environment. Our nurture groups, led by our trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) and Parent Support Advisor (PSA), provide targeted support for children who may be experiencing social, emotional or behavioural difficulties that are impacting on their wellbeing, relationships or learning.

Nurture groups are based on the principles of nurture, which recognise the importance of positive relationships, belonging and emotional security in supporting children's development and success. Through carefully planned activities and structured group sessions, children are given the opportunity to explore emotions, develop social skills and build confidence in a safe and nurturing environment.

The aims of our nurture groups are to:

- develop children's emotional literacy and self-awareness;
- support children in understanding and managing their emotions;
- strengthen communication and interpersonal skills;
- build self-esteem, confidence and resilience;
- promote positive relationships with peers and adults;
- support children through periods of change, transition or difficulty;
- reduce barriers to learning by addressing social and emotional needs.

Nurture group activities may include opportunities for discussion, cooperative games, creative activities, therapeutic play and the development of practical strategies for managing feelings and social situations. Sessions are tailored to meet the needs of the children attending and are delivered in an environment where children feel valued, listened to and respected.

Children may be identified for nurture group support through discussions between school staff, parents and carers, and other professionals where appropriate. Progress is monitored regularly to ensure that support is meeting individual needs and enabling children to engage more successfully in school life.

Additional Wellbeing Support
We recognise that some children may benefit from additional wellbeing support to help them process emotions, communicate their feelings and develop resilience. As part of our wellbeing provision, we are able to offer sand play, drawing and talking interventions, play therapy and other creative approaches tailored to individual needs. These interventions provide children with safe and supportive opportunities to express themselves, build trusting relationships with adults and develop strategies to support their emotional wellbeing.

Answering Questions
As with all questions from children, we will endeavour to answer questions about mental health and wellbeing factually, sensitively and without bias. Individual members of staff will make a professional judgement as to whether it is relevant to address the question posed immediately or at a later stage, and whether to address the answer to an individual, a group or the whole class. If a member of staff is in doubt, he/she will discuss the matter with the Headteacher and if felt relevant, a child's parents or carers.

Signposting
We will ensure that staff, children, parents and carers are aware of sources of support within school, in the local community and further afield. Where appropriate, we will directly refer children, staff, parents and carers to external organisations for support. We are aware that sources of support change regularly and we will be proactive in researching what is available when necessary.

We will regularly highlight sources of support for children, including the use of a safe adult, within relevant parts of the curriculum.

We will display relevant sources of support for staff, including the employee support line in the staff room.

Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of the individual asking for help, by ensuring they understand:

- What help is available;
- Who it is aimed at;
- How to access it;
- Why to access it;
- What is likely to happen next.

Warning Signs
School staff will be vigilant and proactively look for warning signs which indicate a child is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. All staff observing any of these warning signs will record the concerns on a welfare form and share them with the DSL.
Possible warning signs include:

- physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental;
- changes in eating / sleeping habits;
- increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn;
- changes in activity and 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 clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather;
- secretive behaviour;
- skipping PE or getting changed secretively;
- lateness to or absence from school;
- repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause;
- an increase in lateness or absenteeism.

Managing Disclosures
A child may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff, so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. Staff will respond to any disclosure regarding mental health in line with the procedure in our child protection and safeguarding policies.

If a child chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff will listen, rather than advise, and our first thoughts should be of the child's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures will be recorded in writing and held on the child's confidential file. This written record should include:

- Date;

- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made;
- Main points from the conversation;
- Agreed next steps.

This information should be shared with the DSL, who will decide on how to proceed.

Confidentiality
All disclosures will be handled in line with our child protection, safeguarding and confidentiality policies. Staff will be honest with children about the issue of confidentiality and will share with them:

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

We will never share information about a child without first telling them. Ideally, we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and/or a parent or carer.

All disclosures will be recorded on MyConcern and shared with the DSL. This will ensure continuity of care for the child in periods of absence of the safe adult and provide an extra source of ideas and support. Staff will explain this to the child and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with. This is not only about providing support for the child, it also helps to safeguard staff emotional wellbeing.

Parents or carers will be informed if there are concerns about their mental health and wellbeing and children may choose to tell their parents or carers themselves. If this is the case, we will support the child in sharing the information in an appropriate way with their parents or carers, be this for them or with them.

Working with Parents and Carers
We aim to work in partnership with parents and carers in all aspects of school life, including wellbeing. We share with parents and carers our approach to wellbeing and will discuss any concerns we have about their child in an open and honest way.

Before talking to parents and carers about their child's wellbeing, we will consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable;
- Where should the meeting happen? At school or, in rare situations, at their home or somewhere neutral;
- Who should be present? Consider parents and carers, the child, other members of staff;
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or be upset during the first conversation. We will be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent or carer support and time to reflect. We will be mindful that any disclosure of poor mental health or wellbeing, could affect the mental health or wellbeing of the parent or carer too.

We will always highlight further sources of information as parents and carers often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that is being shared with them. If appropriate, we will share sources of further support aimed specifically at parents, e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We will always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions, and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call, as parents often have many questions as they process the information. We will finish each meeting with agreed next steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

In order to support parents and carers in supporting their children, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website and closed Facebook page;
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to access this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child;
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents;
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHCE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

Supporting Peers
When a child is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis, which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the child who is suffering and their parents or carers, with whom we will discuss:

- what it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told;
- how friends can best support;
- things friends should avoid doing/saying which may inadvertently cause upset;
- warning signs that their friend needs help (e.g. signs of relapse).

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- where and how to access support for themselves;
- safe sources of further information about their friend's condition;
- healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling.

Training
As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their annual child protection training each September in order to enable them to keep children safe.

We will signpost members of staff to further sources of information. The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.[1]

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 children.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

The school will highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

[1] **www.minded.org.uk**.