

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy



Preston Grange Primary School

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Last reviewed: January 2024

Next review due: January 2026

At Preston Grange Primary School we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all pupils, staff and families. Our open culture allows pupil voice to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

This policy is a guide to all staff and governors– outlining our school approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing.

It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies, our mental health provision map and our mental health action plan.

Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and pupils.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in pupils.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to pupils with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Use our embedded school ethos and values to help support the development of positive mental health.
- Raise awareness amongst staff about the importance of their own mental health and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting in place.

Key Staff Members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, however key members of staff have specific roles to play;

- Senior Mental Health Leads (SMHL) – also trained Mental Health First Aiders(MHFA)
- Mental Health Lead / HLTA for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Support - also to be trained in Human Kind Staff Wellbeing Award
- Licensed THRIVE practitioners (x2)
- Connect Mental Health Support Team (MHST) consisting of 2x Senior Primary Mental Health Worker (SPMHW), 2x Education Mental Health Practitioners (EMHP) and 1 trainee Education Mental Health Practitioner (EMHP)
- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- EHA Lead
- PACE practitioner
- SENDCo
- PSHE curriculum lead

Curriculum

The skills, knowledge and understanding our pupils need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum. This forms the basis of our universal offer. Please refer to our provision map and PSHE and RSE policies for more information.

We draw on guidance from the PSHE Association to support our teaching around mental health and emotional health safely and have an updated PSHE curriculum which reflects this.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.

We do this in the following ways;

- Connect MHST padlet
- Parent / carer workshops & coffee mornings
- Informal support from Mental Health Lead
- Posters around school
- Highlight avenues of support through social media
- Branches of support available to staff through insurance policy
- Connect MHST present at school events e.g. harvest festival
- Early Help process
- MHST guide and signpost parents directly
- Signposts linked to enrichment or theme days

Sources of Support

We recognise some children and young people 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.

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil, in the first instance they should speak to the Mental Health Lead (usually during a staff briefing).

The Mental Health Lead decides on the appropriate course of action linked to our provision map. E.g. THRIVE, nurture, PACE, CBT, Friends Resilience

If there is a concern that the pupil is at high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed.

If the child presents a high risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

Please refer to our Social, Emotional and Mental Health provision map to see the types of support available at different levels.

- Universal offer
- Targeted offer school intervention
- Targeted offer MSHT or outside agency intervention

The targeted intervention pathways are accessed through a cause of concern that could be raised by either a member of staff, a parent or carers or a child. Targeted support from the MHST or outside agency involves a referral process by our Mental Health Lead through the consultation process with MHST.

Local Support

See North Tyneside Asset Map for a full list of emotional well-being and mental health services.

Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil 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 alert the Mental Health Lead who will work in collaboration with the Senior Mental Health Lead.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of 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 secretly
- Lateness to, or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

A full CPD programme for all staff has been planned and delivered with Senior Mental Health Lead and MHST to support staff in understanding, identifying and raising concerns around safety, anxiety, trauma, low mood and self-esteem.

Our MH Lead will support children, where attendance is or could potentially be affected by anxiety or poor mental health, through referral to the MHST, liaison with families and through other avenues such as EHA. Please read our attendance policy for more detail. [Attendance policy 2019](#)

Maintaining a Positive Culture around Mental Health

As a school we strive to be open and honest about Mental Health. We use links to the 5 ways to wellbeing to support the culture and our aim is to help remove stigma around mental health and create a positive culture where children and adults feels comfortable and supported as they move around the mental wellbeing continuum. Staff and pupils are made aware of this continuum.

Individuals who are experiencing a deterioration in their day-to-day functioning will need professional support.

The continuum is shown below;



The mental wellbeing continuum shows that we can slide between positive/optimum wellbeing through to mental ill-health which will have an impact on the daily lives of the individual.

We encourage staff, pupils and parents to be proactive about their own mental health. In addition to this we monitor staff and pupil wellbeing through biannual questionnaires and signpost and use the information to make referrals and request support from the MHST if required.

In school, children are made aware that their mental health is as important as their physical wellbeing. We encourage children to self-refer by speaking to a trusted adult in school who will pass on their concerns to the Mental Health Lead.

Confidentiality

The therapeutic work delivered by the MHST is confidential. They provide school with a basic outline of the intended therapeutic work and relevant information regarding strategies that school may use to support the therapeutic work. A record of cases is kept by the Senior and Mental Health leads and documents pupil voice, parent/carer voice to allow us to assess the impact of the provision.

Class teachers and other staff are informed that children in their class are receiving support but the detail of this is not widely shared.

Whole School Approach

Working with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are aware that we have a named point of contact in school (HLTA Mental Health Lead) and the Connect MHST based in school. Parents can, if they have a concern about their child, contact the named staff member or the MSHT directly.

Ahead of a consultation or a referral starting our Mental Health Lead will discuss the concerns with parents/carers. We are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and come to terms with the situation. The Mental Health Lead is experienced in supporting families in these situations.

Signposting parents to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication are kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. The Mental Health Lead follows-up by;

- Sharing assessment and work to be done with child if they are receiving THRIVE or nurture work
 - Link the parent/carer with MHST if that is the appropriate referral pathway.
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- In addition, the MHST may offer support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills. This may involve providing information or offering small, group-based programmes.
 - The Mental Health Lead may ensure parents, carers and other family members living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they

need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing. This will include support to participate in any parenting sessions, by offering a range of times for the sessions or providing help with transport and childcare. We recognise this might involve liaison with family support agencies.

Training

All staff receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training to enable them to keep pupils safe. We ensure all staff have a baseline understanding of the feelings cycle, anxiety, low mood, trauma, self-esteem. Please refer to the key staff members above for details of training and accreditations linked to Mental Health.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge are developed depending on the current needs in school. E.g. trauma training, mermaids.

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.

Our aim is to develop a group of pupils as Mental Health Champions. These children will all have received therapeutic input from MHST and will be trained by our Mental Health Lead alongside the MHST. These children will offer peer support within PSHE lessons (where appropriate) and playtimes.

This policy will be reviewed and updated to reflect our developing provision and practice in school.

