



# **Mental Health and Well Being Policy**

Approved by: School

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## **1. Policy statement**

*Mental health is a state of well-being 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 2014)*

At West Acton Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches and interventions aimed at vulnerable pupils.

West Acton Primary School welcomes families with that may have transitioned and are not stable so often slip through the net regarding information and advice.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, at least three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

## **2. Scope**

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

This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies: Safeguarding, Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs and SEND. Other policies such as Antbullying, Behaviour Management and Online Safety may be relevant.

## **3. Policy Aims**

- Promote positive mental health in all staff , parents and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with pupils with mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents or carers
- Provide support and guidance to parents with mental health problems.

## **4. Lead Members of Staff**

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

- Carole Ives - Deputy Head Teacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead/Mental Health Lead
- Karen Kondo – Head teacher, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Jude Lucas - SENDCO
- Lia Younes - School Counsellor

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the mental health lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate

referral to the designated child protection officer, the head teacher or the designated governor. If the pupil 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 Carole Ives.

## **5. Individual Care Profile**

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Details of the pupil's interests and family background
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

## **6. 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 in the Ealing PSHE scheme of work that is taught throughout the school.

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

We follow the Ealing Local Authority planning to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Once a year we celebrate Mental Health Week and two or three times a year we have assemblies on the theme of Mental Health.

## **7. Signposting**

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. We have a support service called 'The Space', pupils can self refer by completing a slip, placing it in one of the two boxes in school and then they will be contacted to a member of the lead team or they can attend the lunch time drop in service. Each classroom also has a Calm Box that has small items which pupils can access to calm themselves and there are 'Flip your lid' Posters around the school. West Acton currently enlists the service of Ealing School's Counselling Partnerships and has a School Counsellor on site on Mondays.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as the staff room, around school on posters, The Space box, on our website, notice board, in our newsletters and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupils help-seeking by ensuring pupils understand:

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

## **8. Warning Signs**

School 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 communicate their concerns with to the safeguarding team via myConcern or speak to Carole Ives.

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 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

## **9. Managing disclosures**

A pupil 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.

If a pupil 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 should listen rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be reported via myConcern or to Carole Ives.

This information should be shared with the Carole Ives, who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

## **10. Confidentiality**

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

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

We should never share information about a pupil without first telling them in accordance with safeguarding procedures. 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.

Staff may feel in need of support after supporting a pupil: this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing - Carole Ives or Karen Kondo can support staff with this e.g by referring to the school Counsellor or Employee Assist Service helpline.

Parents should always be informed, in line with safeguarding procedures, or if pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed but the school's safeguarding procedure followed.

## **11. Working with Parents/Carers**

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents/carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should 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, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents/carers, the pupil, 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 upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent/carer time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too, e.g. parent helplines and forums.

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

### **11.1 Working with all Parents /Carers**

Parents/carers are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents/carers, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents/carers
- Share ideas about how parents/carers can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home e.g. via workshops, our website and newsletters.
- Hold regular workshops and coffee mornings to support parents/carers.

## **12. Supporting Peers**

When a pupil 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 with the pupil who is suffering and their parents 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 or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend may need 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

At West Acton this peer support can be seen via: Cybermentors, Health champions, School Council, friendship bench, friendship club and PSHE also supports being kind and keeping yourself healthy.

### **13. 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 to enable them to keep pupils safe.

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 developing situations with one or more pupils.

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 Ealing health improvement team provide training to schools on a variety of topics related to mental health including twilight, half day and full day INSET sessions and the Headteacher works closely with the team to make effective use of this bespoke service which we have bought into.

### **14. Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years as a minimum.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to Carole Ives at via [admin@west-acton.ealing.sch.uk](mailto:admin@west-acton.ealing.sch.uk)

This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.