



Larkspur Primary School

Mental Health Policy

C Anderson – Sendco, Inclusion Lead and Mental Health Lead

J Nesbitt – Family Support Worker, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead & Deputy Mental Health Lead

Date : March 2023

Review: March 2027

This policy was written in consultation with staff, pupils, parents and professionals involved in mental health and wellbeing.

Policy Statement

At Larkspur Primary School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff.

We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is 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.

At our school 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 and ensure children know that they count.
- encourage children to be confident and 'dare to be different'
- help 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 and PSHE curriculum teaching
- Bespoke lessons and assemblies in response to local issues
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement/loss, life changes and trauma.
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties including attachment disorder, SEND, anxiety, relationship difficulties, behavioural issues and trauma.
- Encouraging good attendance by working with both parents and children which in turn creates a sense of belonging and security.

Scope

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Child Protection Policy, Anti Bullying, SEND Offer and our Positive Behaviour Policy. It draws on our whole school use of behaviour management procedures, whole school approach, enabling the pupil voice, PSHE support and trying to understand the causes of behaviours.

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Mrs M Liddle - Designated child protection / safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Miss J Hall – Deputy DSL
- Mrs C Anderson – Deputy DSL, SENDco, and Mental Health Lead
- Mrs J Nesbitt – Deputy DSL, Family Support Worker and Deputy Mental Health lead
- Mrs N Bell – PSHE Curriculum Lead and Health & Wellbeing Team
- Mrs K Bunn – Health & Wellbeing Team

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching 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.

Targeted support

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.
- Therapeutic interventions such as Thrive, Theraplay, Lego therapy
- Nurture Groups such as Friendship, self-esteem, Art & Chat, anger management
- Time to Talk drop-in with Family Support Worker
- Managing feelings resources e.g. 'worry monsters'
- Managing emotions resources such as 'Zones of Regulation'
- Mental health and wellbeing groups

- Counselling
- Specific assemblies on topical or safeguarding issues such as Stay Safe Programme, Fire Safety, stranger danger and safeguarding.

Reviewing Support and Outcomes

The school will review children's needs regularly at Inclusion Meetings and make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate including:

- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire
- Children's questionnaires
- 1:1 chats with children
- Talking to class teachers

All 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
- Changes in behaviour

Working with Parents

In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website, letters, newsletters or Facebook account
- 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.
- 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.

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 health team
- Educational psychology services
- Behaviour support Service
- HINT (High Incidence Needs Team)
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- NE Counselling

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 students safe. All staff attend regular bitesize training such as safeguarding topics, SEND, attachment and abuse. Key staff have also attended specific courses related to issues that may affect mental health.

Two staff members are trained as Mental Health Leads in school as directed by the Dfe.

