



Towngate Primary Academy

Mental health and wellbeing policy

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

Statement aims

At Towngate Primary Academy, 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.

In our academy, 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 academy 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 on learning and experiences;
- Access to appropriate support to meet needs.

We pursue our aims through:

- Universal, whole school approaches;
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement;
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long term difficulties;

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 and Anti-bullying, and PSHE and SMSC policies. It should also sit alongside child protection procedures.

Definition of Mental Health and Wellbeing

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing:
... 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.

Mental health and well-being is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/young people and staff to:

- feel confident in themselves
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others
- cope with the stresses of everyday life
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change
- learn and achieve

Links to other policies

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Inclusion, Children In Care Anti-Bullying, Positive Behaviour Police, Personal Social Health Education (PSHE), Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy.

Links with the Positive Behaviour Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need.

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 Annabel Berry – Designated Safeguarding Lead / Headteacher / Mental Health Lead
- Mrs Laura Poole – Deputy Safeguarding Lead / Deputy Headteacher / RSE Lead
- Mrs Amy Bateman – Assistant Headteacher / Safeguarding Officer / CiC Designated Teacher
- Miss Sharon Lockett - Safeguarding Officer / SENCo / Deputy Mental Health Lead
- Mrs Emma Johnson - Safeguarding Officer / Learning Mentor
- Mrs Rebecca Holmes – Nominated Mental Health and Wellbeing Governor

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that pupils with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems; such a physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

A Whole School Approach

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help pupils become more resilient, be happy and successful and prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses seven aspects:

1. creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience that everyone understands
2. helping pupils to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to
3. helping pupils to be resilient learners
4. teaching pupils social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health
5. early identification of pupils who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services
6. effectively working with parents and carers
7. supporting and training staff to develop their skills and resilience

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues and aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of mental health issues. We aim to be a 'talking school' with an 'Open Door Policy'.

Early Identification

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- Identify individuals that might need support
- being an Attachment Aware School

- working with the pastoral team who are often the first point of contact with families seeking support
- home visits in Nursery to identify needs
- induction meetings for pupils / families joining after the Reception year
- analysing behaviour, exclusions, first aid needs, attendance and behaviour reports
- pupil voice throughout the school Year
- staff report concerns about individual pupils to the Learning Mentor/SENCO and Designated Safeguarding Team
- 'On My Mind' boxes in each class for pupils to raise concerns which are checked by the class teacher
- weekly care and concern meeting for staff to raise concerns about individual children
- gathering information from a previous school at transfer or transition
- parental meetings
- enabling pupils to raise concerns to class teacher and support staff
- enabling parents and carers to raise concerns through the school class teacher or to any member of staff - we have an 'Open Door Policy'

All staff have had training on the protective and risk factors, types of mental health needs and signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health problems. Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the SENCO, Learning Mentor or Designated Safeguarding Team.

These signs might include but are not limited to:

- non-verbal behaviour
- isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits
- lowering academic achievement
- talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- an increase in lateness or absenteeism
- not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE
- drug or alcohol misuse
- physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

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.

We believe the School has a key role in promoting children positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our School has developed a range of strategies and approaches including:

Pupil-led activities

- Assemblies to raise awareness of mental health.
- Head boy and Head girl
- Prefects
- Sports Leaders
- Recognition Jars
- Dojo Leaders

Transition programmes

- Transition Programme to secondary schools which includes all Year 6 children having a staff mentor to support a smooth transition to secondary school
- Luggage for life sessions
- Cpoms Handovers

Class activities

- Recognition jars as a mechanism where children can be praised for certain duties, tasks or things they have done and have them celebrated in class
- On My Mind boxes where children can anonymously share worries or concerns in class
- Wellbeing Wednesday sessions
- Daily Mile

Whole school

- Displays and information around the school about positive mental health and where to go for help and support
- A range of quality books for the children to access in classrooms and in the corridor.
- A staff library with reading material for staff to empower their own knowledge.
- Weekly Mental Health Newsletter for parents and staff
- Mental Health Awareness Weeks
- Website – page dedicated to mental health and wellbeing

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;
- Targeted use of PSHE resources;
- Managing feelings resources e.g. 'On My Mind';
- Managing emotions resources such as 'the incredible 5 point scale';

- Primary Group Work/Mental health and wellbeing groups;
- Therapeutic activities including art, lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques.
- Access to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)
- Support from Educational Psychologist
- Early Help Referrals
- Lunch Clubs

Involving Parents and Carers

Promoting Mental Health

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting their children with mental health needs.

To support parents and carers:

- we organise a range of Mental Health workshops accessing expertise from voluntary services such as Future in Minds. This includes topics such as Anxiety, Stress Management and Sleep.
- we provide information and signposting to organisations on our websites on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- have an Open Door Policy.
- supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs through sensitive and supportive regular meetings and signposting.

When a concern has been raised the school will:

- contact parents and carers and meet with them
- in most case parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as child protection issues.
- offer information to take away and places to seek further information
- be available for follow up calls
- make a record of the meeting
- discuss how the parents and carers can support their child
- keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger. We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Pupils are our primary concern, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our academy and how to access further support.

Support is promoted through the weekly wellbeing newsletter which has the following link: www.south.westyorkshire.nhs.uk/Wakefield-camhs-resources/

This has information to develop knowledge and to learn about strategies could use at home about managing anger, anxiety, bereavement and loss, coronavirus, friendships and relationships, low mood, mindfulness and coming back to school.

This link www.redcross.org.uk/get-involved/teaching-resources/wellbeing-activities-being-kind-to-yourself will support parents in accessing information about loneliness and anxiety and has links to activities which parents could use for themselves or with their children to develop a positive approach to wellbeing in the home.

Links are also available on the parent page Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Identifying needs and Warning Signs

All staff will be made aware through weekly children of concern meeting of children who are experiencing a range of possible difficulties including:

- Attendance;
- Punctuality;
- Relationships;
- Approach to learning;
- Physical indicators;
- Negative behaviour patterns;
- Family circumstances;
- Recent bereavement;
- Health indicators.

School staff may also become aware of warning signs that 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.

The Mental Health Team are trained in protective and risk factors (see Appendix 1), types of mental health needs (see Appendix 2) and signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health problems. Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the Mental Health Lead or the SENDCO.

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.

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 services;
- Paediatricians;
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service);
- Counselling services;
- TAS (Team around the school);
- Family support workers;
- Therapists.

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;
- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g. through parent forums;
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get 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 via newsletters, twitter and the academy website.

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 in order to enable them to keep students 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 to developing situations with one or more pupils.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing. Staff also have access to counselling services.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The mental health and wellbeing policy is on the school website and hard copies are available to parents and carers from the school office. All mental health professionals are given a copy before they begin working with the school as well as external agencies involved in our mental health work.

The policy is monitored at an annual review meeting led by the Mental Health Lead and involves staff with a responsibility for mental health, including specialist services supporting the school and governors.

Appendix 1 Protective and Risk Factors

	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
In the Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic influences • Specific development delay • Communication difficulties • Physical illness • Academic failure • Low self-esteem • SEN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being female (in younger children) • Secure attachment experience • Outgoing temperament as an infant • Good communication skills, sociability • Being a planner and having a belief in control • Humour • Problem solving skills and a positive attitude • Experiences of success and achievement • Faith or spirituality • Capacity to reflect
In the Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overt parental conflict including domestic violence • Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted) • Inconsistent or unclear discipline • Hostile and rejecting relationships • Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs • Physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect • Parental psychiatric illness • Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder • Death and loss – including loss of friendship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult) • Affection • Clear, consistent discipline • Support for education • Supportive long-term relationship or the absence of severe discord
In the School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying • Discrimination • Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships • Negative peer influences • Peer pressure • Poor pupil to teacher relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear policies on behaviour and bullying • 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems • A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health • Positive classroom management • A sense of belonging • Positive peer influences
In the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic disadvantage • Homelessness • Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events • Discrimination • Other significant life events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider supportive network • Good housing • High standard of living • High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying • Opportunities for valued social roles • Range of sport/leisure activities

Appendix 2 Specific Mental Health Needs

For information see Annex C Main Types of Mental Health Needs

Mental Health and Behaviour in School DfE March 2016

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

Annex C includes definitions, signs and symptoms and suggested interventions for

- Anxiety (including panic attacks, phobias and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder OCD)
- Depression
- Eating Disorders
- Substance Misuse
- Self-Harm