

BELLAGHY PRIMARY SCHOOL
HEALTH AND WELL BEING POLICY

SCHOOL ETHOS AND MISSION STATEMENT

Bellaghy Primary School strives to provide, in partnership with parents, a broad quality education so that all the pupils can reach their full potential within a caring, secure environment promoting self-discipline, motivation and individuality.

RATIONALE

We have a supportive and caring ethos within our school. Our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual is celebrated and their contribution is valued. We endeavour to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress and we aim to ensure that they are supported to reach their potential or to access help when they need it.

We also have a role to ensure that children have an understanding in age appropriate language of what constitutes a healthy mind. We want our children to learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, additional emotional support may be required. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

While this policy primarily refers to the health and well-being of the children under our care, the policy also makes reference to the health and well-being of staff members. The mental health of our staff is vital as these staff members are the most valuable resource we have in the teaching and learning process.

LEAD MEMBERS OF STAFF

Designated Teacher for Child Protection - J Torrens

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection and Learning Support Co-ordinator – ML Richmond

Chair of Governors – Timothy Dowie

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.”

We want all children/young people 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.

STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES IN SCHOOL

At our school, 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 in order to promote self-esteem
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Helping children to understand their emotions and feelings better and to feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- ✓ Helping children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks

Specific strategies include:

- Worry boxes - a mechanism where children can anonymously share worries or concerns in class, these differ depending on Key Stage
- Circle times/morning meetings where we talk about our feelings openly and within a safe and comfortable space.
- Positive behaviour management
- Assemblies on related topics
- Christian values and ethos within the school
- Star of the Week
- Regular P.D.&M.U. teaching and learning for all year groups
- Regular R.E. lessons with appropriate links to mental health and wellbeing
- Implementation of the P.A.T.H.S. programme
- Pupil/child of the day – compliment promotion
- Age appropriate mental health topics taught within each Key Stage – link to R.S.E Policy
- Seeking pupil views and involvement through school council
- Specialist support programmes for those going through bereavement or any trauma
- Use of social stories in younger classes
- Outdoor play and learning activities
- Pupil Questionnaire and staff response
- Mindful Monday, Thoughtful Tuesday, Wellbeing Wednesday, Thankful Thursdays, Fun-filled Friday.

SIGNPOSTING

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

EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND WARNING SIGNS

All staff will be vigilant in identifying a range of possible difficulties that may be contributing to a pupil's poor mental health, including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement, tragedy or trauma
- Health indicators

School staff may also 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 the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking about self-harm or suicide
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping P.E. or getting changed secretly
- 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 PARENTS AND CARERS.

Parents or carers can approach their child/children's class teacher if they have mental health concerns about their child. This will be cascaded to the DT for further investigation.

To support parents and carers we will:

- Provide information online on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.

- Share ideas about how parents and carers can support positive mental health in their children.
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics taught in P.D.&M.U. and share ideas for extending and exploring this at home.
- Organise workshops and presentations on mental health, anxiety, resilience and steps to wellbeing.

When a concern has been raised, the DT will:

- Contact parents to discuss (Although there may be cases, parents and carers cannot be involved due to child protection issues.)
- Discuss any relevant referrals to external agencies.
- Signpost parents to further information or provide resources to take away.
- Create a chronology of actions and events and maintain records.
- Discuss how parents can support their child through strategies or signposts to parenting support groups.

WORKING WITH SPECIALIST SERVICES

As part of our targeted provision, the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing where appropriate and available. Children may be referred to one of the following services for additional support.

- Educational Psychology Services
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- School Nursing Service
- Children's and Family Services
- Therapists
- Family support workers
- Counselling Services

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 our children safe.

Opportunities for further training in more specialist areas where appropriate through additional CPD as available.

STAFF HEALTH AND WELL BEING

The school is committed to staff members feeling content with their position at our school. The Principal will meet with each staff member annually (and at other times if the need arises) to discuss his/her role. The Principal will ensure that no member of staff feels burdened with their work load and to this end, teacher time sheets are available.

It is imperative that if any staff member feels overwhelmed with their work load or are feeling anxious or worried about any aspect of their job, that the Principal and Chair of Governors are informed and steps are taken to address the concern or issue. Staff members can be signposted to E.A. Care Call or other organisations within the system to support them in their need.

A number of events will be organised during the school year to allow staff members to relax with their colleagues in an atmosphere of fun e.g. school Christmas dinner, end of term dinner, birthday celebrations etc.

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

This policy sits within the Safeguarding Portfolio with specific links to:

- Child Protection
- Anti-Bullying
- Positive Behaviour
- Relationships and Sexuality
- Attendance and Punctuality

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy will be monitored and kept under review by the Board of Governors.

Policy Reviewed – September 2024

Review Due – September 2025