

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy



Policy Reviewer	Bev Doran	Date of Review	22.01.24
Mental Health Lead: Rachel Hawley Mental Health & Wellbeing First Aider: Pam Clarke		Date of next Review	21.01.25

INTRODUCTION

Everyone experiences life challenges or difficulties that can make us vulnerable. At times, anyone may need additional support to maintain or develop good mental health. Findings suggest that up to 1 in 10 children and young people aged between 1 and 15 years old, have a clinically recognisable mental disorder in any one year. There are further suggestions that 1 in 4 adults will experience mental health difficulties and at least half of these difficulties can be traced back to childhood.

Overley Hall caters for children and young people with complex needs, Severe Learning Difficulties and a large percentage of whom have an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC). Our students have difficulties regulating their emotions, social communication, sensory issues, social understanding and flexibility of thinking. This policy has been designed to promote the mental health, wellbeing and safety of the young people and children whilst recognising and supporting the challenges they face on a day to day basis.

DEFINITION

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2014) stress that,

“Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realises their 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”.

They define health as a

“...state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 2014).

When considering these definitions and the complex needs of the students, everyday ‘stresses of life’ become magnified where, in some cases, a challenge is merely about tolerating the use of a singular sense such texture or sight. There is then the need to tolerate several senses at once and the progression to utilise such skills whilst engaging, for example, within a literacy lesson. Furthermore, an activity involving work experience. Supporting the children and young people throughout the challenges they face on a day to day basis can be challenging from various perspective but at Overley Hall School we are committed and believe that all learners and staff have the right to be educated, or work, in an environment that supports, enhances and promotes mental health and wellbeing for everybody.

RATIONALE

The department of Health’s White Paper recognises that there should be more support for emotional wellbeing and resilience as it is,

“...an inseparable link between good emotional and physical health and success in learning and achievement” and, “...life skills and emotional resilience acquired in

childhood and adolescence help people cope with challenges throughout their lives".

Furthermore, the national criteria states,

"A healthy school ensures that when pupils are unhappy, anxious, disturbed or depressed there are open channels for them to seek or be offered support, without stigma and with appropriate confidentiality. A healthy school actively seeks to promote emotional health and wellbeing and helps pupils to understand their feelings".

At Overley Hall School we believe that mental and emotional health and wellbeing promotes school success and improvement by:

- contributing positively to priorities such as enhancing teaching and learning, raising standards, promoting social inclusion and improving behaviour and attendance
- involving pupils in the operation of the school
- helping pupils and staff feel happier, more confident and more motivated
- helping to meet legal, ethical and curricular obligations

Emotional health and wellbeing is central to the Every Child Matters strategy.

VALUES

At Overley Hall School we believe that all children and young people have the right to be educated in an environment that supports, enhances and promotes positive mental health and wellbeing for everybody.

We also believe that all adults have the right to work in an environment that supports, enhances and promotes positive mental health for everybody.

We recognise these needs and rights and we are committed to raising awareness, increasing understanding and ensuring that our establishment can and makes a difference, by providing a place where all children and young people feel safe, secure and able to achieve and experience success and well-being.

Healthy relationships underpin positive mental health and have a significant impact.

A mentally healthy environment has:

- A clear and agreed ethos and culture that accords value and respect to all
 - A commitment to being responsive to children and young people's needs
 - Clearly defined mental health links in school policies
 - Clear guidelines for internal and external referrals
 - Strong links with external agencies to provide access to support and information
-

- A named lead for mental health promotion with the expectation that there is support and involvement and an ethos that 'mental health is everyone's business'

A mentally healthy environment is a place where children and young people:

- Have opportunities to participate in activities that encourage belonging
- Have opportunities to participate in decision making
- Have opportunities to celebrate academic and non-academic achievements
- Have their unique talents and abilities identified and developed
- Have opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Have opportunities to reflect
- Have access to appropriate support that meets their needs
- Have a right to be in an environment that is safe, clean, attractive and well cared for
- Are surrounded by adults who model positive and appropriate behaviours, interactions and ways of relating at all times

A mentally healthy environment is a place where staff:

- Have their individual needs recognised and responded to in a holistic way
- Have a range of strategies that support their mental health, eg a named person to speak to, signposting
- Have recognition of their work-life balance
- Have the mental health and well-being of the staff reviewed regularly
- Feel valued and have opportunities to contribute to decision making processes
- Celebrate and recognise success
- Are able to carry out roles and responsibilities effectively
- Are provided with opportunities for CPD both personally and professionally
- Have their unique talents and skills recognised and opportunities are provided for development
- Have time to reflect
- Can access proactive strategies and systems to support them at times of emotional needs in both the short term and the long term

A mentally healthy environment is a place where parents/carers:

- Are recognised for their significant contribution to children and young people's mental health
- Are welcomed, included and work in partnership with schools and agencies
- Are provided with opportunities where they can ask for help when needed
- Are signposted to appropriate agencies for support
- Are clear about their roles and expectations of their responsibilities in working in partnership with schools
- Opinions are sought and valued and responded to
- Strengths and difficulties are recognised, acknowledged and challenged appropriately

A mentally healthy environment is a place where the whole school community:

- Is involved in promoting positive mental health
-

- Is valued for the role it plays in promoting positive mental health
- Contributes towards the ethos of the school

A healthy learning environment provides opportunities that promote positive mental health, through the standard curriculum and extended provision, eg Circle Time, SEAL, play, nurture groups, differentiated learning activities, individual timetables, parents/carers groups, challenging stereotypes, etc.

The implementation of the policy for promoting positive mental health in schools:

- Will give schools a cohesive and co-ordinated approach to mental health
- Should underpin all policies and practices currently used in schools
- Will raise awareness as to how the whole school community can look after their own mental health and that of others
- Will help to de-stigmatise mental health
- Will support people and provide opportunities that enable everyone to reach their potential
- Will strengthen relationships and provide opportunities for different ways of working
- Will provide foundations for life-long learning
- Will promote and strengthen resilience throughout the whole school community and empower everyone to face life's challenges

This policy promotes positive mental health. It is a working document and has been developed in consultation with the whole school community.

This policy must be reviewed every two years.

Measuring Impact

This policy offers opportunities to measure the impact in a variety of ways:

- School policies
- The school's ethos
- Child/Staff/Volunteer well being
- Staff/Governor/class and school council meetings
- Feedback from the whole school community via questionnaires and verbally, formally and informally
- The number of external referrals, Gateway, Health Service, Social Care
- Training and development internally, for example 'Safeguarding, Mental Health and Wellbeing' inset
- Induction and professional development of Staff and Volunteers

The promotion of positive mental health for children and young people is everyone's business

References:

- Wigan Children and Young People's Plan 2008-11
 - The Mental Health Promotion Strategy for Children and Young People, Wigan 2009
-

- Children's Health: A Guide Fundamental Health Local Government Information Unit (LGiU) 2007
- Bright Futures: Promoting children and young people's mental health, Mental Health Foundation
- Article 28, 29, 30 and 31 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Work/Life Balance National Agreement 2003-2005

Read in conjunction with:
School Development Plan
Behaviour Policy – Attitude and Behaviour
Child Protection Procedures
Equality Scheme

AIMS

General

Happier and more motivated pupils and staff who get more out of life

Teaching and Learning

Pupils who are more engaged in the learning process

Pupils who can concentrate and learn better

Improved standards in all subjects, including literacy and numeracy.

Improved attainment

More effective teaching

Parents and carers more involved in school life and learning

Behaviour and Attendance

Pupils with high self-esteem and confidence

Pupils who have a say in what happens at school

Fewer disaffected pupils, disengaged from learning

Improved behaviour and attendance

Less aggression towards peers and staff

Staff Confidence and Development

Improved morale

Lower absenteeism

Better recruitment level

Positive and effective relationships with pupils

VEHICLES FOR EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The school promotes and provides a range of services to pupils:

- ☐ Hygienic toilets which ensure privacy and safety
 - ☐ School council to act as mentors
 - ☐ A pastoral base staffed with non teaching pastoral assistants and a qualified first aider
-

- ☐ Co-ordinated support from a range of external organisations
- ☐ Welcome days and transition events

The school promotes an anti bullying culture through:

- ☐ A strong school ethos which empowers tolerance and respect, including respect for difference and diversity
- ☐ High profile of anti bullying procedures and policy through corporate posters, assemblies and events such as national anti bullying week and using SEAL materials
- ☐ Active listeners, including assistants and adults other than school staff to whom the victim may turn

The school promotes and strengthens the pupil voice through:

- ☐ A democratic process for the election of school council representatives
- ☐ Timetabled meeting time for members of the school council
- ☐ Involving pupils in interviews for members of staff
- ☐ Consulting pupils about change and policy development
- ☐ Allocating a school council budget
- ☐ Pupil led assemblies

The school promotes the involvement of parents and carers in the life and learning of the school through:

- ☐ Parent questionnaires
- ☐ Regular consultation about change and development through questionnaires and special meetings
- ☐ Subject Focus evenings, Sports and Theme Weeks and Concerts/Music Events
- ☐ Involvement in school trips and extracurricular activities
- ☐ Regular communication and involvement over pupil progress, behaviour and pastoral issues

The school facilitates a context for learning through:

- ☐ Enhancing school and classroom layout; facilities and resources
- ☐ Recognising the background of individual pupils and their physical, social and emotional needs
- ☐ Establishing clear rules, routines and expectations about behaviour for learning and social cohesion.
- ☐ Encouraging positive, caring and constructive relationships