

## Shepherds Down School Pupil Wellbeing Policy 2022

### Policy Statement

At Shepherds Down School we are committed to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all of our pupils. We endeavour to provide them with foundations for positive mental health and wellbeing in order for them to fully access and benefit from the educational opportunities available to them, and to positively engage with the wider community. We aim to achieve this through a universal approach where we proactively seek to create an environment where wellbeing is addressed through our curriculum, and supported and upheld through our school ethos and culture.

We recognise that for some children, there may be periods in their life where wellbeing is adversely affected leading to episodes of mental ill-health or reduction in wellbeing. We are committed to recognising, identifying and addressing these issues through an appropriate referral system and bespoke targeted or specialist support as a result.

### Definition of Wellbeing

‘The strength and capacity of our minds to grow and develop, to be able to overcome difficulties and challenges, and to make the most of our abilities and opportunities.’ *Young Minds*

We want children to be able to...

- Develop positive relationships with peers and adults
- Express emotions appropriately
- Develop resilience to cope with change and/or setbacks
- Build life-skills and independence skills in line with their level of individual ability
- Value themselves, others, and their environment
- Develop self-esteem
- Learn strategies for self-regulation and self-control
- Begin to understand emotions in others
- Learn that it’s OK to ask for help when things are hard

We aim to address this by...

- Promoting our school vision where ‘every child is accepted’ and ‘there is a culture of valuing all’
- Providing children with opportunities for developing confidence and self-worth
- Celebrating success however big or small
- Creating a culture where children can have a say and be heard
- Providing a safe environment where appropriate policies are valued and followed
- Raising awareness and understanding in all staff of signs of mental health issues
- Ensuring all staff are engaged in providing universal support for wellbeing and are aware of the processes to be followed when targeted support is required
- Having clear pathways for referral where additional specialist or professional support is required
- Providing appropriate support for staff working with children presenting with mental ill health

### Promoting wellbeing for all children through a universal approach

The start-point of all that we do at Shepherds Down School is a commitment to creating an ethos where all of our pupils are accepted, valued, and nurtured in order to fulfil their potential.

Fundamental to the provision of wellbeing support for all of our pupils is the implementation of universal support strategies. Primarily, these strategies are embedded in the Personal and Social Development (PSD) components of our core curriculum. Where appropriate, class teachers may choose to plan discreet PSD sessions to meet the needs of the class, but the main elements of the PSD curriculum will be built into wider learning and activities. Our universal approach to promoting positive health and wellbeing for our pupils will include some or all of the following, depending on the needs and abilities of individual children:-

- To develop emotional regulation skills
- To develop independence and self-care skills
- Opportunities to form relationships with adults and peers
- To learn how to stay safe
- To learn how to self-occupy
- To be able to access the school facilities and wider community
- To tolerate waiting and taking-turns
- To communicate wants and needs
- To develop social skills
- To make right choices to stay healthy
- Behaviour support
- Sensory input – e.g. sensory diets, sensory circuits
- Creative activities – e.g. art, music, Forest School
- Physical activities – e.g. PE, swimming, playtimes,
- Mindfulness and relaxation

### Identifying and supporting children who need additional support

We acknowledge that it can be difficult to recognise signs of a mental health problem in children with learning difficulties as symptoms can be framed in terms of challenging behaviour or attributed to their learning disability rather than a mental health need. Due to the nature and level of need of our pupils, standard measures of wellbeing are not appropriate and it is therefore necessary to have an individualised rather than standardised approach to identifying need. This will rely on the team around that child having good knowledge of what is deemed normal for them, what symptoms are deemed new or have increased in severity, and what may have changed or altered for that child at a personal or environmental level. Concerns about a child's wellbeing could be raised from a variety of routes including, EHCP reviews, information from parents, My Concern, and observations from staff around known issues within the classroom. Class teams can raise concerns to the Headteacher by completing a 'Raising concern about pupil wellbeing' form (Appendix 1). The Headteacher and other appropriate staff will assess the level of need presented on the form and ensure appropriate support is actioned. This could be targeted, or specialist support.

#### **Targeted**

Where a child may be struggling with a particular aspect of their wellbeing, or where an adverse life experience has brought on a period of mental ill-health, a short-term intervention or intervention

differentiated from standard universal provision may be employed. The following are examples of targeted support that may be made available to individual pupils:-

- ELSA
- ELTA
- Music Therapy
- Lego Therapy
- Safe spaces
- 1:1 work rooms
- Time to nurture relationships with adults or specific children
- Adjustments to IBP's

### **Specialist**

Where the mental health needs of a pupil present as complex and/or long-term and go beyond support that school can provide, consultation with external agencies may be required. This may include consultation with:-

- Educational Psychologist
- CAHMS
- Paediatrician
- Social care

### Relevant members of staff

The school Senior Leadership Team has a responsibility to the staff and children at Shepherds Down to equip staff with the knowledge and understanding necessary to identify signs of mental ill health in our pupils. **All staff** have the responsibility to report concerns about a child's wellbeing in an appropriate and timely manner, by reporting concerns to their line-manager as soon as is reasonably practicable. In addition to all members of staff, the key members of staff involved in the wellbeing of our school pupils are:-

- Senior Leadership team: Debby Gooderham, Megan Burden, Nicola Smith
- Safeguarding team: Debby Gooderham (Safeguarding Lead), Megan Burden, Nicola Smith
- Senior Mental Health Leads: Debby Gooderham, Sarah Sansome
- Wellbeing Governors: Sarah Sansome, Alison Marlow, Peter Fellowes

### Related policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Curriculum Policy

### Review date

July 2024

Appendix 1.

**Raising concern about pupil wellbeing**

Name of pupil	Date
What changes have you noticed in the child's behaviour or emotions that are different from what is normal for them?	
Where and when are behaviours happening?	
What impact is it having on the child?	
How have you tried to address the behaviours?	
Do you know of anything that has changed for the child?	
<b>Personal changes</b> – e.g. physical changes, illness	<b>Environmental changes</b> – at home or in school

Please complete and give to Debby Gooderham

### **Pupil wellbeing - guide**

The following can be used as a guide when completing a Pupil wellbeing checklist. Identifying a potential mental health problem for children at Shepherds Down requires comparing what is deemed normal for the child, with new or increased behaviours that are causing concern. The following list contains examples of behaviours and attributes that may signal the presence of a mental health problem or indicate potential for one to develop. It is not exhaustive.

- Social withdrawal
- Irritability
- Avoidance of certain situations
- Agitation
- Changes in mood (sudden or gradual)
- Changes in level of activity
- Loss of interest in activities usually enjoyed
- Signs of physical harm
- Aggressive behaviours
- Self-injurious behaviours
- Restless
- Prolonged sadness
- Tearful
- Reduction in academic performance
- Deterioration of skills
- More prompting required
- Unwilling to engage
- Obsessive behaviours (OCD)
- Hypervigilance
- Impatient
- Worry/anxiety
- Impatient
- Restless
- Loss of appetite
- Change in eating habits
- Lethargy
- Changes in continence
- Breakdown of relationships
- Disruptive behaviours
- Impulsivity/lack of self-control
- Self-deprecating language