



Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

Mission Grove Primary School

This Policy has been written for and adopted by the Governing Body of Mission Grove Primary School.

VISION STATEMENT

*Everyone Aims High
Everyone is included
Creativity is valued*

VALUES

*Respect, Inclusion, Lifelong learning, High Aspirations,
Resilience, Communication.*



Approved by Governing Body

Date:

Mental Health & Wellbeing POLICY

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Policy Statement

At Mission Grove Primary School, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. The school promotes the mental and physical health and emotional wellbeing of the whole school community. Wellbeing is at the forefront of the school's PSHE programme and promoting good mental health is a priority. The physical, mental and emotional health benefits of exercise are well documented and the school actively encourages sport for all.

"Mental health is a state of wellbeing 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." (World Health Organization 2014)

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.

PART ONE: STAFF WELLBEING

Aims

Mission Grove Primary School wants to ensure that staff are supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally. We recognise that staff wellbeing is vital to pupil achievement and the school's performance. We are committed to making sure that each individual is able to cope successfully with the demands in their lives, whatever the cause of stress. Our aim is to maintain a school ethos which supports staff health and wellbeing by making sure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently.

The actions within this policy have 5 key aims:

1. To minimise the harmful effects of stress
2. To provide effective support for all staff
3. To help each individual to achieve an appropriate work-life balance
4. To take a positive and understanding approach to the management of stress in line with current good practice
5. To respect confidentiality

At our school we:

- develop a healthy, motivated workforce who are able to deliver a high-standard of education to pupils.
- ensure that our school promotes the health and wellbeing of all staff members, recognising the impact work can have on employees' stress levels, mental and physical health.
- communicate the importance of a work-life balance to all staff, and to ensure that all policy updates are communicated regularly.
- respond sensitively to external pressures which affect the lives of staff members.
- provide staff with training to deal positively with stressful incidents, and provide them with a sense of confidence to deal with emergencies via training.
- improve staff development, co-operation and teamwork by creating effective leaders.
- make staff members aware of the channels which can be used to manage and deal with stress or work-related health and wellbeing issues.

We promote a mentally healthy environment for staff through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
- ensuring individual needs are recognised and responded to in a holistic way
- using a range of strategies that support their mental health, e.g. a named person to speak to, signposting
- recognition of their work-life balance
- reviewing the mental health and wellbeing of the staff regularly
- ensuring they feel valued and have opportunities to contribute to decision making processes
- Celebrating and recognising success
- Ensuring they are able to carry out roles and responsibilities effectively

- providing with opportunities for CPD
- having their unique talents and skills recognised and opportunities are provided for development
- Have time to reflect
- Making sure everyone can access proactive strategies and systems to support them at times of emotional needs in both the short term and the long term

We pursue our aims through:

- Universal, whole staff approaches
- Support for specific groups of staff, e.g. specialised behaviour training for staff working with children with additional needs
- Individualised support, where required

Procedures to support staff wellbeing

- Effective communication with staff e.g. briefings, email updates, boards in staff rooms
- All staff have clear job descriptions
- Continuing professional development for all staff.
- Social events.
- Performance management
- All staff encouraged to contribute to the School Development Plan.
- Access to confidential sessions with counsellor
- All staff invited to INSET days.
- Consideration is always given staff member's personal needs e.g. requests for sabbaticals, requests for time off to attend own children's school events
- Access to occupational health support
- 1:1 coaching
- Supporting staff to access external sources of support, where necessary
- Annual staff wellbeing survey is undertaken, with results informing further developments to support wellbeing.

Supporting a member of staff with a wellbeing concern

Senior Leadership Team will ensure there is an atmosphere where all staff members feel comfortable asking for help or raising concerns; and are sensitive to any problems which may cause the employee stress-related issues and should act in a professional, fair, consistent and timely manner when a concern arises.

Where additional, professional advice is required, the school has contacts with Occupational Health Professionals and Human Resource experts and these avenues should be utilised. Where necessary, staff will be encouraged to use the confidential counselling service available

The school will provide support to any employees facing high-levels of stress in the workplace, as well as other work-related issues which are having/have the potential to have negative impacts on the staff member's health and wellbeing. The various options for dealing with such issues should be discussed with staff members where appropriate.

In some cases, this may include external support such as the teacher helpline or support from occupational health.

During this time, the school will ensure that at all times the staff member's privacy and dignity is respected. This means maintaining confidentiality, upholding the employee's rights and dealing with the employee with tact and sensitivity.

Mission Grove's mental health and wellbeing framework for staff



PART TWO: PUPIL WELLBEING

Aims

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 for pupils 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
- Having their unique talents and abilities identified and developed
- 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
- Ensuring that the school environment is safe, clean, attractive and well cared for
- Ensuring pupils are surrounded by adults who model positive and appropriate behaviours, interactions and ways of relating at all times

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

Teaching about mental health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils 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.

Zones of Regulation

As part of our PSHE curriculum the children are taught about the 'zones of regulation'. The idea of the lessons is to help pupils to gain skills in the area of self-regulation, or self-control, and to be in the best state of alertness, of both the body and emotions, for the specific situation.

In addition to addressing self-regulation, the students gain an increased vocabulary of emotional terms, skills in reading other people's facial expressions, perspective about

how others see and react to their behaviour, insight into events that trigger their behaviour, calming and alerting strategies and problem solving skills. The Zones of Regulation is not a behaviour management tool. It is a way of helping children understand how they are feeling and giving them the techniques to deal with heightened emotions. This will allow them to be in the best frame of mind for learning, and for enjoying school life.

Identifying needs and warning signs

All staff will monitor children's wellbeing and are trained to be alert to possible warning signs which may 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 to one of the designated child protection and safeguarding leads or the inclusion manager, 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

Targeted support

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- Circle time approaches
- Managing feelings resources e.g. 'worry boxes'
- Use of the sensory room
- Zones of regulation activities
- Nurture groups
- Lunchtime groups
- Use of social stories
- Therapeutic activities including art, Lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques.
- Sessions with the school counsellor
- Sessions with the learning mentor

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.

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 or in the newsletter/app.
- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g. through the parent council.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their child.
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.

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:

- School counsellor
- The school nurse
- Educational psychology services
- Paediatricians and other health professionals
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Early Help and Children's services

Training

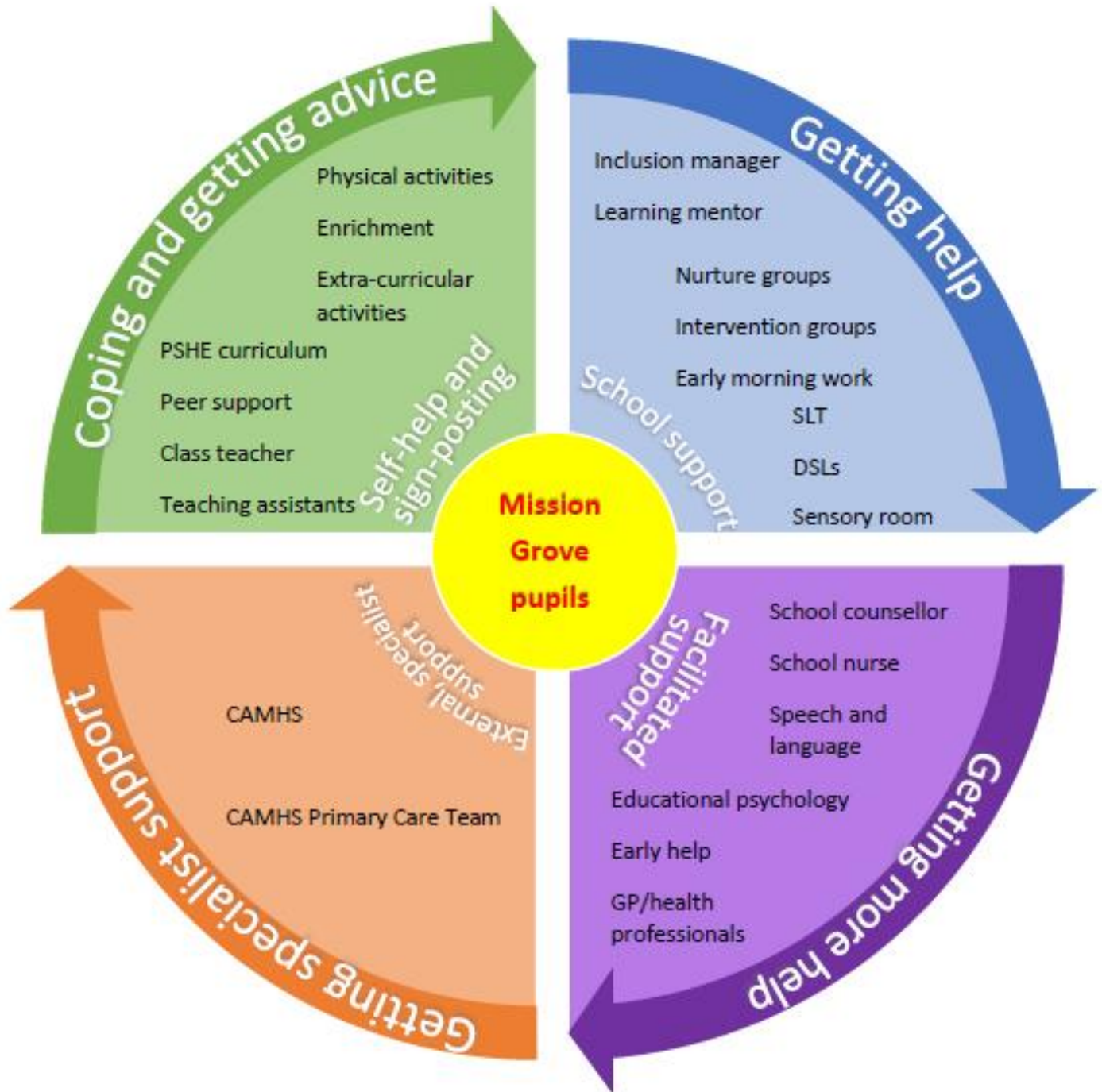
As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep students safe.

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.

Scope

This policy sits alongside our safe-guarding and child protection policy and procedures. It should be read in conjunction with our SEND policy in cases where pupils' special educational needs and mental health needs overlap. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for behaviour and anti-bullying, as well as our PSHE policy and scheme of work.

Mission Grove's mental health and wellbeing framework for pupils



Waltham Forest Young People's Mental Health Charter

As part of our commitment to promoting positive mental health, Mission Grove has signed up to the Waltham Forest Young People's mental health charter.

Waltham Forest Young People's Mental Health Charter

Waltham Forest's young people, schools, services and organisations commit to the following pledges to support the mental health of young people in the Borough.

We Will...



Appendix 1: Supporting a child with a bereavement

Children's understanding of death

Children's understanding of death is influenced by their culture, environment and unique personal experiences. Generally:

- Pre-school children often have very little comprehension and find it difficult to understand that death is final.
- Slightly older children, before the age of 9 are more likely to find death frightening and will also try to understand and make sense of it. Sometimes this understanding is influenced by religious or spiritual beliefs, but children at around this age may also attribute blame to themselves and internalise their feelings.
- By the beginning of secondary school, children are more likely to understand that death is final and will commonly have the vocabulary to describe their emotional responses to this. However, children at this age may still be at risk of blaming themselves for a death and so it is important that they are given outlets for expressing all their emotions.
- Once children move into adolescence they are often fascinated by death, including consideration of their own mortality. Social media and online platforms are also widely available to teenagers, making it very important that they are encouraged to talk about their emotions in an appropriate and safe space.

Any loss requires a period of adaptation - we need a collective pause for breath to process what has happened to us – not a mad dash to 'normality' as this is no longer there - it is now the past.

Supporting a child with a bereavement: advice from the NHS website

Children may be experiencing grief if they have lost someone close to them, or if there has been a death in the school community or local community. Although staff will usually be aware of any deaths in the school community, children may sometimes have suffered a bereavement that staff are unaware of.

Following a bereavement, a child might show any of these responses:

- Alternating between play and sadness
- Tiredness
- Mood swings
- Regression and loss of skills
- Anger and frustration
- High-risk behaviour
- Lack of response, or denial

If a child has a loved one who's dying

If a child has a loved one who's going to die, they can benefit from special support. A child's stress level is often at its highest before bereavement because of fear and the unknown.

Pre-bereavement counselling gives a child a chance to think and talk about their feelings and share their worries.

They may wish to make a memory box. A memory box contains things that remind you both of your time together. It can provide an important link between the loved one and the child once they have passed away. Macmillan Cancer Support has further information about making a memory box.

If a child has lost a loved one

Talk about the person who has died

During bereavement, it can help a child to talk about the person who's died, whether it was a grandparent, parent, brother, sister or friend.

It's important for them to have someone with whom they can talk about that person and share their emotions. This could be through photos, games, memory boxes or stories.

There are also bereavement charities that offer helplines, email support, and online communities and message boards for children.

These include:

Child Bereavement UK – call 0800 028 8840 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, or email support@childbereavement.org

Cruse Bereavement Care – call 0808 808 1677 Monday and Friday, 9.30am to 5pm, and Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 9.30am to 8pm, or email info@cruse.org.uk

Grief Encounter – call 0808 802 0111 Monday to Friday, 9am to 9pm, or email contact@griefencounter.org.uk

Hope Again – call 0808 808 1677 Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5pm, or email hopeagain@cruse.org.uk

Winston's Wish – call 0808 802 0021 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, or email info@winstonswish.org

Make a memory box

If the person who's died did not leave a memory box, you could make one with your child.

It can include:

- gifts
- shells collected on the beach
- memories written on a card
- anything that makes the child feel connected to that person