Water Orton Primary School

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

1. Intent

At Water Orton Primary School, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing for all members of our school community, including pupils, staff and families.

We believe that mental health and emotional wellbeing are fundamental to children's ability to learn, develop, build positive relationships and achieve their potential. We recognise that mental health is just as important as physical health and that everyone has a role to play in creating a mentally healthy school environment.

Our school is built on a supportive, caring and inclusive ethos, where relationships are rooted in kindness, respect and understanding. We strive to ensure that every individual feels safe, valued, listened to and able to be themselves.

We recognise that everyone experiences challenges throughout life and that, at times, children and adults may need additional support to manage their emotions, overcome difficulties and maintain positive mental health. We understand that emotional wellbeing can be affected by a wide range of factors, including family circumstances, relationships, bereavement, additional needs, experiences of adversity and changes in life circumstances.

Our approach is based on prevention, early identification and appropriate intervention. We aim to create an environment where emotional wellbeing is openly discussed, concerns are recognised early and individuals feel confident to seek help without stigma or judgement.

Through our whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing, we aim to:

- Help children develop an understanding of their emotions and feelings and the factors that can influence their mental health.
- Equip children with strategies to manage their emotions, cope with challenges and develop resilience.
- Ensure children feel comfortable expressing their worries and know that there are trusted adults who will listen and help.
- Develop children's social skills and ability to form and maintain positive relationships.
- Promote self-esteem, confidence and a strong sense of belonging.
- Encourage children to celebrate individuality, recognise their strengths and have the confidence to be themselves.
- Support children to understand that making mistakes and experiencing setbacks are a normal part of learning and growing.
- Promote kindness, empathy, respect and positive relationships throughout our school community.
- Identify children who may benefit from additional emotional wellbeing support and ensure appropriate help is available.

- Promote the wellbeing of all staff and recognise the importance of a healthy, supportive working environment.

2. A Whole-School Approach

We believe that positive mental health and emotional wellbeing are everybody's responsibility. We aim to promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and developing a strong sense of belonging and community.
- Building positive, trusting relationships between children and adults.
- Providing a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued.
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities for children to participate in decision-making.
- Celebrating academic, social, personal and non-academic achievements.
- Providing opportunities for children to develop independence, responsibility and a sense of worth.
- Teaching children to recognise and communicate their feelings and seek help when needed.
- Providing opportunities for reflection, mindfulness and emotional regulation.
- Promoting positive relationships, kindness, respect and an understanding of individual differences.
- Recognising the importance of physical health, exercise, sleep, nutrition and time outdoors in supporting emotional wellbeing.
- Ensuring that appropriate support and intervention are available to meet individual needs.
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and external agencies.

We recognise that children's emotional needs may present in different ways. We therefore take a compassionate, individualised approach and seek to understand the reasons behind behaviours rather than focusing solely on the behaviour itself.

3. Implementation – Our Graduated Approach

Our provision is based on three interconnected levels of support.

Universal support – for all pupils

We promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing through everyday school life, relationships and teaching.

This includes:

- A planned PSHE curriculum using the Jigsaw scheme.
- Regular opportunities to explore emotions, relationships, resilience and positive mental health through lessons and assemblies.
- Consistent approaches to promoting positive behaviour and respectful relationships.
- Opportunities for pupil voice and participation.
- A nurturing classroom environment where children feel safe to share concerns.
- Access to trusted adults who children can approach for support.

- Opportunities for physical activity, relaxation, reflection and social interaction.
- Celebrating individual achievements and promoting positive self-esteem.
- Promoting awareness of mental health and challenging stigma.

Early intervention – additional support when needed

We recognise that some children may experience periods of increased emotional vulnerability or difficulty. Where concerns are identified, we aim to respond promptly and provide appropriate additional support.

This may include:

- Additional check-ins with a trusted member of staff.
- Emotional coaching and individual conversations.
- Access to a Learning Mentor or SEMH practitioner.
- Targeted small-group activities.
- Support with transitions, changes in routine or challenging circumstances.
- Support following bereavement or other significant life events.
- Communication and partnership working with parents and carers.
- Monitoring and reviewing a child's emotional wellbeing and progress.

Targeted and specialist support – for more complex or ongoing needs

Some children may require more individualised or sustained support due to complex, persistent or long-term emotional wellbeing needs.

Where appropriate, this may include:

- Individualised emotional wellbeing support plans.
- Bespoke interventions delivered by appropriately trained staff.
- Support for children experiencing anxiety, attachment-related needs or difficulties with emotional regulation.
- Referral to, or consultation with, relevant external professionals and services.
- Multi-agency working to ensure a coordinated approach.
- Regular review of provision and the impact of interventions.

Where mental health needs overlap with special educational needs and disabilities, support will be considered in conjunction with the school's SEND procedures and, where appropriate, the graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review.

4. Identifying Needs and Recognising Warning Signs

All staff have a responsibility to be aware of changes in children's emotional wellbeing and to respond with sensitivity and care.

We recognise that mental health difficulties do not always present in obvious ways and that changes in behaviour may be an indication that a child is experiencing emotional distress or needs additional support.

Potential indicators may include:

- Changes in attendance or punctuality.
- Becoming increasingly withdrawn or socially isolated.
- Changes in friendships or relationships.
- Changes in mood, behaviour or usual presentation.
- Increased anxiety, distress or difficulty managing emotions.
- A decline in engagement, concentration or approach to learning.
- Repeated physical complaints without an obvious explanation.
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns reported to school.
- Increased difficulty managing transitions or changes in routine.
- Changes in family circumstances or experiences of bereavement.
- Expressions of low self-worth, hopelessness or significant emotional distress.
- Any disclosure or indication that a child may be at risk of harm.

Staff should remain alert to patterns of behaviour and changes over time rather than relying on individual indicators.

All concerns must be taken seriously. Staff should share concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a deputy DSL in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Where a concern relates to a child's immediate safety, staff must take immediate action in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Staff must not attempt to diagnose mental health conditions. Their role is to notice, listen, reassure, record and refer concerns appropriately.

5. Responding to Concerns

When a child is experiencing emotional or mental health difficulties, our priority is to ensure that they feel safe, listened to and supported.

Staff will:

- Listen carefully and respond calmly and sensitively.
- Reassure children that their feelings are important and that support is available.
- Avoid making assumptions or dismissing a child's concerns.
- Share information with the appropriate member of staff.
- Record and report concerns in accordance with safeguarding procedures.
- Involve parents and carers where appropriate and safe to do so.
- Consider whether additional support, assessment or referral is required.

Confidentiality will be respected wherever possible. However, children and families will be made aware that information cannot be kept confidential where there are concerns about safety or safeguarding. Information will be shared appropriately and on a need-to-know basis.

The school recognises that staff are not mental health professionals and will work with external agencies when a child's needs require specialist assessment or intervention.

6. Targeted Support and Interventions

The school offers a range of interventions and resources to support pupils' emotional wellbeing. Provision will be matched to individual needs and reviewed regularly.

These may include:

- Calm Club, supporting children who experience anxiety around attending school.
- Worry boxes and Worry Eaters to help children communicate and manage worries.
- Zones of Regulation to support emotional awareness and regulation.
- Emotional coaching and Social Stories.
- Individual or small-group support sessions.
- Therapeutic and creative activities, including art, Lego-based activities, relaxation and mindfulness.
- Blossom and Doodle Club.
- Mentoring and Anger Gremlins.
- Morning Movers to promote physical activity and positive readiness for learning.
- Additional pastoral support from Learning Mentors and the SEMH practitioner.

These interventions form part of a wider approach to supporting children and are not intended to replace specialist mental health assessment or treatment where this is required.

The impact of interventions will be monitored through observations, pupil voice, discussions with parents and carers, staff feedback and appropriate assessment tools.

7. Teaching About Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

We recognise the importance of equipping children with the knowledge, skills and understanding to look after their own mental health and support others.

Mental health and emotional wellbeing are explored through our developmental PSHE curriculum, delivered using the Jigsaw scheme, alongside assemblies, classroom discussions and everyday interactions.

Teaching and learning opportunities include:

- Recognising and naming different emotions.
- Understanding that everyone experiences a range of feelings.
- Developing strategies to manage worries and difficult emotions.
- Building positive friendships and relationships.
- Developing self-esteem, confidence and resilience.
- Understanding the importance of kindness, empathy and respect.

- Knowing when and how to seek help from a trusted adult.
- Recognising the importance of healthy lifestyles and positive routines.
- Understanding that mental health can change over time and that asking for help is a positive step.

Teaching will be age-appropriate, inclusive and sensitive to the needs of individual children. Staff will be mindful that some topics may be particularly sensitive for children who have experienced difficult circumstances.

8. Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents and carers play a vital role in supporting children's mental health and emotional wellbeing. Positive communication and strong relationships between home and school help us to provide consistent and effective support.

We will:

- Ensure parents and carers know who to contact if they have concerns about their child's emotional wellbeing.
- Provide information about available support through the school website and regular newsletters.
- Share information about mental health and wellbeing topics taught through PSHE.
- Offer suggestions and resources to help families support positive emotional wellbeing at home.
- Work collaboratively with parents and carers when identifying and reviewing additional support.
- Listen to parental concerns and recognise the valuable knowledge families have about their children.
- Signpost families to appropriate external support and services where necessary.

Where safeguarding concerns arise, the school will follow its safeguarding procedures and share information with relevant agencies as appropriate.

9. Working with External Agencies and Partners

We recognise that some children will require support beyond that which can be provided within school.

Where appropriate, we will work collaboratively with external professionals and services to ensure children and families receive suitable support.

These may include:

- School nursing services.
- Educational Psychology services.
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- Counselling services.
- Family support workers.
- Relevant therapeutic services.
- Local Authority services.
- Other health, education and children's services.

Referrals and information-sharing will be undertaken in accordance with relevant safeguarding, consent and information-sharing procedures.

We recognise the importance of early help and multi-agency working in achieving positive outcomes for children.

10. Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing

At Water Orton Primary School, we recognise that staff wellbeing is essential to creating a positive, supportive and effective school environment.

We are committed to developing a culture where staff feel valued, respected, supported and able to discuss concerns about their own wellbeing.

We aim to promote staff wellbeing through:

- Encouraging open and supportive communication.
- Promoting positive working relationships and a culture of mutual respect.
- Providing opportunities for staff voice and feedback.
- Recognising and celebrating staff contributions and achievements.
- Providing access to appropriate wellbeing support and signposting.
- Offering opportunities for professional development and relevant wellbeing training.
- Encouraging staff to maintain appropriate work-life boundaries.
- Providing opportunities to raise concerns with the Senior Leadership Team.
- Supporting staff experiencing personal or professional challenges wherever reasonably possible.

The Senior Mental Health Lead and Senior Leadership Team will signpost staff to appropriate support, including confidential support services available through the school's Local Authority arrangements.

Staff are encouraged to seek support when needed. Information about an individual's wellbeing will be treated sensitively and shared only where appropriate and necessary.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff

All staff have a responsibility to:

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Foster positive, trusting relationships with pupils.
- Recognise potential indicators of emotional distress.
- Listen to and respond sensitively to children's concerns.
- Share and record concerns appropriately.
- Follow safeguarding procedures where necessary.
- Promote an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued.

Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Provide strategic leadership for mental health and wellbeing across the school.
- Ensure appropriate policies, procedures and support systems are in place.
- Promote staff wellbeing and a positive school culture.
- Ensure staff have access to relevant training and support.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the school's provision.

Senior Mental Health Lead

The Senior Mental Health Lead will:

- Coordinate and develop the school's whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing.
- Support staff in identifying and responding to emotional wellbeing needs.
- Promote awareness, training and good practice.
- Coordinate the staff wellbeing group.
- Help identify appropriate interventions and external support.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of wellbeing provision.

Designated Safeguarding Leads

The DSL team will:

- Provide advice and guidance when mental health concerns overlap with safeguarding.
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are responded to in accordance with school procedures.
- Coordinate appropriate information-sharing and referrals.
- Work with relevant external agencies where required.

SENDCo and Pastoral Team

The SENDCo, Learning Mentors and SEMH practitioner will contribute to identifying needs, planning appropriate support and reviewing the effectiveness of interventions.

Lead Members of Staff

· Leanne Mach - Senior Mental Health Lead/ Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Inclusion Lead

· Emma Smith - Designated Safeguarding Lead / Headteacher

· Chris Plow - Designated Safeguarding Lead / SENDCo / Deputy Headteacher

· Claire Bick – Designated Safeguarding Lead / Assistant Headteacher

· Jackie Williams- Learning Mentor

· Sally Addis – Learning Mentor

· Jess Price – SEMH Practitioner

· Jenny Ward - Designated Safeguarding Lead / Online Safety Lead

12. Training and Development

We recognise that staff need appropriate knowledge and confidence to support children's emotional wellbeing.

The school will:

- Provide regular training to help staff recognise potential mental health and emotional wellbeing concerns.
- Include relevant mental health and wellbeing awareness within safeguarding training.
- Ensure staff understand how and when to report concerns.
- Provide additional training opportunities where specific pupil or whole-school needs are identified.
- Ensure that the school has a trained Senior Mental Health Lead.
- Maintain access to appropriately trained Mental Health First Aid provision within the Evergreen Team.
- Encourage staff to access relevant professional development and wellbeing support.

Training needs will be reviewed regularly and considered as part of the school's professional development planning.

13. Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact

We are committed to ensuring that our approach to mental health and emotional wellbeing has a positive impact on children and staff.

The Senior Mental Health Lead and Senior Leadership Team will regularly review the effectiveness of the school's provision.

We will consider a range of information, including:

- Pupil voice and feedback.
- Parent and carer feedback.
- Staff feedback and wellbeing discussions.

- Attendance and punctuality information.
- Behaviour and engagement patterns.
- Participation in targeted interventions.
- Progress towards individual emotional wellbeing targets.
- Feedback from external professionals.
- The effectiveness of support plans and interventions.

Where appropriate, the school may use recognised assessment and monitoring tools, including:

- Boxall Profile.
- Emotional literacy scales.
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ).

Information from these tools will be considered alongside professional observations, individual circumstances and feedback from children and families. They will not be used in isolation to diagnose mental health conditions.

The school will use findings to identify strengths, consider areas for improvement and inform future provision, training and resource allocation.

14. Scope and Related Policies

This policy applies to all pupils and staff at Water Orton Primary School.

It should be read alongside the following school policies and procedures:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- SEND Policy and Information Report.
- Behaviour Policy.
- Anti-Bullying Policy.
- PSHE and RSE Policy.
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.
- Attendance Policy.
- Staff Wellbeing arrangements.

Where mental health and emotional wellbeing concerns overlap with safeguarding, SEND or medical needs, the relevant school policies and procedures will be followed.

15. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Mental Health Lead and Senior Leadership Team, or sooner if there are significant changes to statutory guidance, school provision or identified needs.

The review will consider feedback from pupils, parents, staff and governors, alongside relevant information about the impact of the school's provision.

The policy will be approved through the school's agreed governance arrangements and made available to the school community through the school website.

Written by: Leanne Mach
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Next review: September 2027