

Vigo Primary School



EMOTIONAL HEALTH and WELLBEING POLICY

This policy has been approved and adopted by the Governing Body in 2020 and will be reviewed annually

Policy Statement:

At Vigo Primary School, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing needs of all our children and staff.

The culture within our school is one that we are very proud of to have nurtured and tailored to the emotional needs of our amazing children. It is a culture of motivation, independence, resilience, respectfulness, open-mindedness and responsibility (MIRROR values).

At our school, we know that everyone experiences different life challenges, and that each of us may need help to cope with them at times. We understand that anyone and everyone may need additional emotional support. Positive mental health is everybody's responsibility at our school. We all have a role to play.

Policy Scope:

This policy is a guide to all staff, including teachers, governors and non-teaching staff. It outlines our approach to promoting our children's mental health and wellbeing. It should be read and understood alongside our other relevant school policies, child protection, safeguarding, anti-bullying and safer use of the internet.

Policy Aims:

The aim of our wellbeing policy is to demonstrate our commitment to the positive mental health and wellbeing of our children and staff.

At our school we will always:

- Help children to understand their emotions and experiences better.
- Ensure our children feel comfortable to and confident they will be listened to when sharing their concerns or worries.
- Help children to form and maintain healthy relationships with peers and adults.
- Encourage children to be confident and help to promote their self-esteem.
- Help children to develop resilience and ways of coping with setbacks.
- Be consistent, positive role-models to all children at our school.
- Listen to each other (adults) and support where we can.

We will always promote a mentally healthy environment by:

- Promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all our children and staff.
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements.
- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging and community.
- Providing numerous opportunities for every child to develop a sense of worth and to reflect.
- Promoting our children's voices and giving them the opportunity to participate in decision making.
- Celebrating each and every child for who they are and making every individual feel valued and respected.
- Adopting a whole school approach to addressing and talking about mental health and providing support to any member that needs it.
- Raising awareness amongst staff and children about mental health issues and their signs and symptoms.
- Enabling staff to respond to early warning signs of mental-ill health in our children.
- Supporting staff who are struggling with their own mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Key STAFF Members:

All staff members at our school have a responsibility to promote the mental health of all children and each other. However, certain staff members have a specific role in the process.

These are:

- **Our Designated Safeguarding Leaders (DSLs):**

Mrs Julie Bray, Mr Gary Kew, Mrs Kim Parry, Miss Laura Pearson, Mrs Kelly Roach and Mrs Suzy Wright.

- **Pastoral Staff:**

Ms Lesley Hardy, Ms Pippa Ive, Mrs Kim Parry, Miss Vicky Phillips, Ms Pearl Thomson and Mrs Suzy Wright.

- **SENCO:**

Mrs Suzy Wright

If any member of staff is concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of a child, then in the first instance they should speak to: the child's class teacher, year leader or school DSLs.

If a child presents a medical emergency then relevant procedures will be followed, including involving the emergency services.

Teaching about Mental Health:

Our PDL curriculum is developed to give every child the skills, knowledge, and understanding they need to keep themselves mentally healthy. This includes resilience techniques and training.

We regularly review our PDL curriculum and lesson content to ensure that they're meeting the aims outlined in this policy and are meeting the needs of our children to provide every child with strategies to help keep them mentally well.

We take part in and promote national events, for example, anti-bullying week, children's mental health week and #hellyellow day (young minds charity event).

Support at School and in the Local Community:

We have a number of highly-skilled staff members at school who offer a range of support available for any child in need:

time to talk	This can occur daily or as and when an individual child needs to talk with a trusted member of staff. Its main purpose is to give the child time to share how they are feeling, know someone wants to listen and therefore they will be able to start / continue with their day feeling more positive.
daily / session check-ins	These are given to children who staff feel need dialogue with a trusted adult from school before they attempt their academic learning. It can be for children who we feel may not have had positive interactions at home or children who we feel simply need reassurance from a staff member that we care.
ELSA /FEIPS	Referral from SENCo, class teacher and discussion with parents. ELSA support children to work on their emotional literacy and FEIPS is a child led counselling approach. Both support children by equipping them with skills to establish a warm, respectful relationship with a trusted adult in a safe and calming environment where their thoughts and feelings can be shared honestly and in a non-judgemental way. It aims to support positive self-esteem and self-confidence.
half-termly P4C	This is a whole class focus that is tailored for the needs of individual classes. The underlying

sessions	principle is for children and young people to experience rational and reasonable dialogue about things that matter to them and their teachers. It aims to empower children to share their thinking in a positive and caring space. The aim for each child is not to win an argument but to become clearer, more accurate, less self-contradictory and more aware of other arguments and values before reaching a conclusion.
Class Thrive assessments, individual and small group Thrive sessions	Thrive is a social and emotional assessment tool that identifies gaps in individual's emotional development, creates action plans and enables the gaps to be plugged. It works towards children being emotionally secure at the right stage for their age. All children participate in whole class Thrive sessions during the school day and as part of our PDL curriculum activities. Children who are identified as scoring significantly lower than their chronological age are invited to join small groups or have individual sessions each week.
Full time Family Support Worker in school	Meetings can be arranged with our FSW via the office, telephone call or email. She supports parents and families with a number of family issues and guides them towards services that we offer in school or are available in the local community.
nurture groups	This is for children who we know have not had the most nurturing family experiences or have been exposed /witness to things that a child should not have been. The twice weekly sessions aim to support individual's emotional needs in a safe and caring environment and also for them to experience activities and opportunities they may have missed from younger years. Plugging these gaps will enable children to have positive mental wellbeing and be better prepared for their academic learning and feeling more confident in themselves.
therapeutic story writing group sessions	These sessions are planned for children who have been identified by SLT, SENCO and class teachers. Therapeutic Storywriting Groups use the metaphor in stories to support children whose emotional and behavioural difficulties are getting in the way of their learning.
storylinks sessions (with child and parent)	These sessions are planned in for the families of specific children who have been identified by SLT as at risk of exclusion. It is a parent-partnership intervention to support pupils at risk of exclusion not being excluded. It uses therapeutic storywriting to support pupil's emotional wellbeing and reading skills and the intervention involves pupils, parents and teachers in the co-creation of stories that address the pupils' behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
therapists	Referral from SLT, SENCO, class teacher and discussion with parents to therapists linked to particular needs of individual children. Their aims are to support children with the specific areas identified and therefore enable the children to move forwards primarily emotionally and in turn academically.
circle time discussions	These occur in individual classes as and when the need arises. Children are empowered to ask for these to happen and the focus can be linked to the concerns, worries, needs or interests of the children in the class.
IBMPs	These are written for specific children who have been identified by SLT, SENCO and class teacher as needing an individual behaviour plan in place to enable them to access the school's routine and classroom setting. The child also has a risk assessment that runs alongside the IBMP it explores the proactive measures in place as well as the reactive measures. The aim is for the plan to be followed by everyone who works with the individual child within the school to ensure the child has positive role-models to ensure their day is a success.
weekly discreet PDL sessions following the school PDL curriculum but tailored to the needs of the class	Every class follows the school's PDL curriculum and the children receive a discreet PDL session each week from their class teacher or the PDL lead in the school. The focus follows the school planning but is tweaked to meet the needs of the individuals within each class.
half-termly PDL	Our PDL days ensure that each half term our children are focussing on one of the school's values, or a need that has arisen in individual classrooms. The aim is that after the day the

days	children have addressed a need and will work on it that half term.
Forces and Young Carers club	Invitation by the school for children who we know are young carers or one or both of their parents work for the armed forces. It is a time for these children to come together and interact with children who are in the same position as them. Giving all children in the groups a sense of inclusion and belonging. It is also a time for them to talk about any worries with children who may be experiencing the same things, promoting positive wellbeing.
'Ready to Learn' groups	This is a separate classroom for groups of children, who have been identified by SLT and class teachers as not being able to access the routines and expectations of the classroom and are simply not ready to learn. Its aims are for children to work within the room for part of the school day on social and self-esteem skills and then the skills learned to be transferred into their classroom setting for the rest of the day.
Mindfulness, Comic group and Social Skills groups	SENCo discussion with class teacher about specific children and their needs. The sessions focus on children becoming more aware of their thoughts, emotions and physical feelings linked to one particular area or to cover a variety of possible social difficulties. Also, it aims to focus on positive social interaction and expressing personal creativity whilst focussing on the present and letting go of anything that has been worrying them or making them feel anxious.
class worry monsters	These are used in some classrooms for children to write down their worry and post it into the monster for an adult to see at a later date. This empowers children to share their worry and not letting the fear take over, also allowing the child to share without talking at that point and being able to move on with their rest of their day.
school therapy dog	The school dog is available for individuals, groups and classes to take for walks and look after for short periods of time during the school day. The power of a therapeutic dog has proven to support children in times of uncertainty and offer unconditional love and care which some children lack in their lives.
yearly wellbeing questionnaire completed by all children, analysed and shared with teachers for them to address any concerning findings	Every child in the school completes an annual wellbeing questionnaire, results analysed and then class teachers view and address key areas that the children have shared within class assemblies, P4C sessions, PDL lessons, PDL days and all other opportunities within the school week. This process allows all children within school to have their voice heard and us as staff to address any areas that we can to support children's positive mental wellbeing.

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There is also a lot of support networks available for children in the local community. This includes places such as:

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) www.nhs.uk search for CAMHS	Mind charity www.mind.org.uk
Primary Behaviour Support (PBS)	Simon Says (bereavement charity) www.simonsays.org.uk
Hampshire Youth Access (counselling service) www.hampshireyouthaccess.org.uk	Childline www.childline.org.uk 08001111

Signposting:

We will ensure that all staff, students, and parents are aware of the support that's available in our school for mental health. This includes how to access further support, both inside and outside of school hours.

Identifying Needs and Warning Signs:

All of our staff will be trained in how to recognise warning signs of common mental health problems. This means that they will be able to offer help and support to students who need it, when they need it.

These warning signs will always be taken seriously and any staff who notice any of these signs will communicate their concerns with the DSLs as appropriate.

Staff will be able to identify a range of behaviour and physical changes, including:

- Repeated physical signs of harm or pain
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in mood and activity
- Talking and/or joking about self-harm and/or suicide
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Feelings of failure, uselessness, and loss of hope, low self-esteem
- Secretive behaviour
- Clothing unsuitable for the time of year, e.g. a large winter coat in summer
- Negative behaviour patterns, e.g. disruption

Staff will also be able to identify a range of issues, including:

- Attendance and absenteeism
- Punctuality and lateness
- Changes in educational attainment and attitude towards education
- Family and relationship problems

Finally, staff will be well placed to identify any additional needs arising from difficulties that may impact a child's mental health and wellbeing, such as bereavement and health difficulties.

Managing Disclosures:

If a child discloses concerns about themselves or a friend, to any member of staff, then all staff will respond in a calm, supportive, and non-judgemental manner.

All disclosures will be recorded confidentially (CPOMS) and only shared with the appropriate authorities if it's necessary to keep the child safe, in line with our school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies.

The disclosure record will contain:

- The child's name, date and time of the disclosure.
- The name of the staff member to whom the disclosure was made.
- The nature of the disclosure and the main points from the conversation, verbatim.
- Agreed next steps.

Confidentiality:

If a member of staff thinks it's necessary to pass on concerns about a child, either to somebody inside the school or somebody outside it, then this will first be discussed with the child.

They will be told:

- Who the staff member is going to tell.
- What the staff member is going to disclose.
- Why it's necessary for somebody else to be told.
- When the contact will be.

However, it may not be possible to gain the child's consent first, such as in the case of children who are at immediate risk. Protecting a child's safety is our main priority so we would share disclosures if we judged a child to be at risk.

Whole School Approach:

We take a whole school approach towards the mental health of our children. This means working with parents and carers and with other agencies and partners, where necessary.

Working with Parents and Carers:

We aim to support parents/carers as much as possible. This means keeping them informed about their child and offering our support at all times. To support parents/carers, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing that we have in our school. These are available to be read on our school website.
- Share and allow parents/carers to access further support.
- Ensure that parents/carers are aware of who to talk to if they have any concerns about their child.
- Give parents/carers guidance about how they can support their child's/children's positive mental health.
- Ensure this policy is easily accessible to parents/carers.
- Keep parents/carers informed about the mental health training our school staff receive and how mental health is covered in our school curriculum.

Working with Other Agencies and Parents/Carers:

As part of our whole school approach, we will also work with other agencies to support our children's emotional health and wellbeing. This might include liaising with:

- The school nurse
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS and Hampshire Youth Access (counselling service)
- PBS
- Therapists
- Family support workers

Supporting Peers:

We understand that, when a child is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their peers. In response to this, we will consider, on a case by case basis, any peers that may need additional support and provide that to the best of our ability.

We can provide support in a one-on-one or group setting. These sessions can be guided by the child, but they will discuss how peers can help, how peers can access support themselves, and healthy ways of coping with any emotions they might be feeling.

Training:

All staff will receive regular Thrive training and training in child mental health so that they can recognise and respond to mental health issues. This will form part of their regular safeguarding training and is a requirement to keep children safe, all safeguarding training is held centrally in the school office.

We will consider additional training opportunities for staff and we will support additional CPD throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with children.

Policy review:

This policy will be reviewed annually. This is so that it remains up to date, useful, and relevant. We will also regularly review it in accordance with local and national policy changes.