

# Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing Pupil Policy

## Damers First School



### Policy Statement

According to the World Health Organisation:

**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. Mental health is fundamental to our collective and individual ability as humans to think, emote, interact with each other, earn a living and enjoy life. On this basis, the promotion, protection and restoration of mental health can be regarded as a vital concern of individuals, communities and societies throughout the world.[1]**

At our school, we are committed to the protection and promotion of positive mental health for all pupils. We will continuously endeavour to improve the mental health of the school community by utilising a whole school approach to mental health, and via the

identification and implementation of positive processes and practices which promote good mental health and wellbeing.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we recognise that one in six children and young people may meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental health problem, with emerging evidence of a recent rise in anxiety and depression in some groups. We aim to identify and provide timely and appropriate support for all pupils affected both directly and indirectly by mental health problems.

## **Policy Aims**

By developing and implementing practical, effective and positive policies and procedures relevant to our school and developed in conjunction with pupils and their parents and carers, we can promote a safe and supportive environment and ethos which is conducive to the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school community.

We will:

- Support pupils to understand their emotions
- Help children to manage change and adversity and develop resilience
- Provide an environment which is conducive to pupils sharing concerns about themselves or others

We will promote a mentally healthy school environment by:

- Adopting a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Raising awareness in the whole school community of the signs and symptoms of mental health problems

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[1] World Health Organisation. Mental health: strengthening our response. 2018. Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>

[2] NHS Digital. Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2020: Wave 1 follow up to the 2017 survey. 2020. Available at:  
<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2020-wave-1-follow-up>

[3] McManus S, Bebbington P, Jenkins R, Brugha T. (eds.) Mental health and wellbeing in England: Adult psychiatric morbidity survey 2014. (2016) Available from:  
<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/adult-psychiatric-morbidity-survey/adult-psychiatric-morbidity-survey-survey-of-mental-health-and-wellbeing-england-2014>

[4] Kwong A, Pearson R, Adams M, et al. Mental health before and during the COVID-19 pandemic in two longitudinal UK population cohorts. *British Journal of Psychiatry*. 2020. 218(6).

- Engaging in activities which promote mental health and wellbeing and a sense of belonging in the whole school community
- Celebrating individual differences in pupils, ensuring all pupils feel valued and respected - School Improvement priority Diversity for 2024/25
- Valuing and celebrating non-academic achievements

## Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for teaching and non-teaching staff and governors. The policy and procedures will also be made available for the perusal of pupils and their parents and carers. This policy should be read and understood in conjunction with other relevant school policies including:

- Behaviour and Relationships policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Attendance policy
- Online Safety policy
- Anti-bullying policy

## Policy Objectives:

- Promote positive mental health in all pupils
- Reduce discrimination and stigma by increasing awareness and understanding of mental health problems
- Increase awareness of early warning signs of mental health problems
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
  - Provide support to pupils experiencing mental health problems and their peers and parents or carers
  - Provide opportunities for pupils to look after their mental wellbeing.

## **Lead Members of Staff**

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Moira Bearwish and Ellie Hardisty - Designated child protection / safeguarding officer
- Annie Hardinge - Mental health lead
- Charlotte Hillier - Pastoral lead
- Tom Bracey - SENDco
- Ellie Hardisty - CPD lead
- Moira Bearwish - PSHE lead

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the class teacher in the first instance.

In the event of any concerns that a pupil may be at risk of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed, with an immediate referral to the designated child protection officer, the head of school or the designated governor.

If the pupil presents as a medical emergency, then the school's procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including the involvement of first aid staff and contacting the emergency services.

Where a referral to CAMHS (children and adolescent mental health services) is appropriate, this will be led and managed by SENDco and Mental Health lead.

## **Our approach to a mentally healthy school**

Our overarching aim at Damers First School is to understand the whole child in their learning and prioritise the emotional wellbeing of its pupils. We endeavour to create a supportive and inclusive environment where each child feels safe, valued and understood. We aim to help children develop resilience, healthy coping strategies and positive relationships through our [Vision and Values](#). We know that mental health is as important as physical health where a culture of openness is key to pupils thriving and learning well. We work hard to ensure our curriculum, whether it involves class learning or outside the classroom in our clubs or wider approach in school, addresses all children and their wellbeing.

Here is a list of activities and events designed to be accessible to all to promote positive mental health as an outcome:

- ❖ Behaviour policy and steps approach supports trauma informed practices.
- ❖ Hamish and Milo emotional and early mental health programme. Running currently in all year groups. <https://hamishandmilo.org/>
- ❖ Parent Liaison Officer provides targeted and general support
- ❖ Sensory circuit room/ELSA room and sensory room provide break out spaces
- ❖ Lunch club, alternative play provisions
- ❖ Meet and greets on the gate - separate agreed entries for children.
- ❖ Grab bags in each classroom with theraplay activities for co regulation and attachment
- ❖ JIGSAW PSHE scheme
- ❖ Nature club
- ❖ Draw/talk with trained professional
- ❖ Gardening groups
- ❖ Specialist music group
- ❖ Knitting volunteers

- ❖ Reading dog visits

## Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum - [PSHE curriculum](#). The content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching, but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to identify when mental health problems may be emerging, and to seek appropriate support when needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

## Support and Signposting

Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking. We will ensure that staff, pupils, and parents and carers are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community, including outlining:

- The help that is available
- Who the help is for
- The reasons for accessing the support
- When to access the support
- How to access the support
- What is likely to happen once the pupil has accessed the support

We will display relevant sources of support in classrooms and corridors and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum.

## Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils where there is concern about a potential mental health problem or in instances where a pupil has received a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Care plan development should be a collaborative process, involving the pupil, the parents and carers and any relevant health professionals. The care plan may include:

- Details of the pupil's mental health problem and any diagnosis
- Details of any prescribed medication and any reported side effects
- Special requirements and precautions
- What to do and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play
- The role that parents and carers can play

## Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which may indicate a pupil 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 class teacher and Annie Hardinge, our mental health and emotional wellbeing lead. We all differ in outward manifestations of distress, so it is important to consider any signs of change, for example, someone who is normally outgoing and communicative, becoming less talkative and more withdrawn. It is important to emphasise that for some pupils experiencing distress, there may not be any apparent warning signs, or the pupil may actively be trying to hide their distress.

Potential warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Evidence of any changes to eating or sleeping habits

- Increased isolation from friends or family; becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing thoughts and feelings of failure, hopelessness or worthlessness
- Unsuitable clothing (for example, long sleeves in warm weather)
- Secretive or unusual behaviour
- Avoiding attendance at PE or getting changed secretly
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
  - An increase in lateness or absenteeism
  - Expressing unusual ideas or beliefs

## **Managing disclosures**

If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should focus on listening in the first instance, rather than thinking about giving advice or offering solutions. Our first intent should be on the provision of a safe and secure space to discuss the pupil's concerns and promoting their emotional and physical safety.

All disclosures should be recorded on Myconcern our safeguarding reporting tool. This written record should include:

- The date and time of the disclosure
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made



- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed actions

## **Confidentiality**

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the mental health lead. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil; it ensures continuity of care in our absence; and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with. It may also be necessary to pass on concerns about a pupil to external services, to ensure that the pupil receives the best possible support and to ensure safeguarding. In both instances, we should discuss with the pupil:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them
- When the information will be passed on

## **Working with Parents and Carers**

We recognise the importance of working with and supporting parents and carers as part of our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. In order to support parents and carers, we will:

- Ensure that this policy is available in accessible formats including multiple languages where required
- Make the policy, and other sources of information and support about common mental health issues, available in a prominent position on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to contact and how, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child

- · Ensure that parents and carers are aware of the support available within the school and externally
- · Keep parents and carers informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home
- Provide opportunities for parents to be involved in any training or other activities which may help them support their child's mental health

## **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 to enable them to keep pupils safe.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge will be considered as part of our professional development process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more pupils.

## **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years as a minimum.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis.