

COPPICE VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

Document History

Last review	October 2022
Ratified by LGB	October 2022
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Mental Health at Coppice Valley Primary School

RATIONALE

At Coppice Valley, we recognise that good mental health is as important as good physical health. Our pupils are taught self-care techniques, including recognising and managing emotions, exercise, relaxation and how to build relationships through a rich and varied curriculum. We teach our children how they can help others with their mental health in age appropriate ways.

PRINCIPLES

We use the DfE's guidance, [*Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools*](#), as a guide and work to their ideals:

1. **Prevention:** creating a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely, improving the mental health and well being of the whole school population, and equipping pupils to be resilient so that they can manage the normal stress of life effectively. This will include teaching pupils about mental well being through the curriculum and reinforcing this teaching through school activities and ethos.
2. **Identification:** recognising emerging issues as early and accurately as possible.
3. **Early support:** helping pupils to access evidence based early support and interventions.
4. **Access to specialist support:** working effectively with external agencies to provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment.

Key staff have been trained in children's Mental Health by Compass Buzz, our local Mental Health service provider. Our Senior Mental Health Lead and Headteacher has specialist training.

LEADERSHIP

We recognise the importance of having designated members of the school community to promote Mental Health education in school. Parents are represented in this through our staff leader's work with parent working parties and support groups.

Mental Health Staff Leader – Sam Wright
Mental Health Senior Leadership Team - Emma Meadus, Headteacher

CURRICULUM

- The foundation for our mental health offer is a whole school approach. Learning about mental health is part of our Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum for all children. This teaching and learning for all is part of the **Prevention** phase of mental health, mentioned above. Children receive a dedicated PSHE teaching each week. Beyond lesson time, our school culture embeds good mental health. For example, our extensive grounds have been developed as a haven for nature and reflection. Our meadow and mindfulness areas are used frequently by staff, teaching pupils how to meditate and attend to their own mental health. Pupils also have access to these areas at playtimes as well as our Calm Club. This is a quiet space open at breaktimes in our cabin, where children can enjoy quieter and calmer activities such as colouring and reading. There is always a staff member on duty for children to talk to.
- We also have dedicated Mental Health Days when we promote and celebrate good mental health for all through [*The Five Ways to Well Being*](#) .

A CULTURE OF WELLBEING

- Across the school, staff lead pupils through regular meditation and mindfulness activities, perhaps after an energetic playtime before starting some work.
- When pupils' emotions are causing them distress, we use The [*Take Five*](#) breathing strategy, so that our children can learn to regulate their emotions whenever they need to.

RECOGNISING NEEDS

- This is the **Identification** phase, from the the DfE model. We have a variety of ways that our children can let us know how they are feeling. Each class has an *emotional register* that children fill in on entry to school each morning. By simply drawing a smiley, neutral or sad face next to their name as they get ready for the day. Staff can then pick up on pupils' state of mind and chat to them about it. We also have worry boxes in each class for children to write a note, if they prefer to. We may use [*The Resilience Framework*](#) or [*Boxall Profile*](#) to help us

identify what types of support we could offer. If we think your child may benefit from some bespoke support, we will always talk to you about it first.

- **Individualised Support** for our pupils who may be experiencing mental health and well-being difficulties. After identifying and talking to parents, providing some support for the pupil is the next step. This is the **Early Help** phase. Getting support in a timely fashion can stop a mental health issue from developing further. There are lots of ways we can support children in school, which can range from being very light touch (e.g. a simple chat, organising a playtime buddy or a daily check-in to see how they are feeling) to a series of individual or group sessions with a trained staff member using recognised support programmes and interventions such as [Drawing and Talking](#). Miss Wright is a trained ELSA - Emotional Literacy Support Assistant - meaning she can develop and deliver individualised support programmes to meet the emotional needs of children. More detail on our staged support system is explained here in our [Pupil Well Being Pyramid](#).
- **Signposting to External Support** - occasionally, some children may benefit from expert mental health professionals. We can help families to access this support. We will work with these agencies to provide support in school as best we can.
- **Keep an eye out for warning signs** that might indicate a pupil is suffering with a mental health issue. The acronym MASK can help you to look for the signs. [Action for Children](#) has more information.

M = Mood – a change in mood, They may be irritable, argumentative, withdrawn.

A = Actions – change in eating and sleeping habits, signs of drugs, alcohol, bullying or self-harm

S = Social - easily bored, lonely or withdrawn, getting into trouble. Losing interest in friends, missing school.

K = Keep Talking – refusing to talk about how they feel. Keep listening and keep asking how they are.

- **What to do next if you have concerns** – you can seek advice from our Mental Health Lead and Family Support Worker, Sam Wright. If your concerns involve safeguarding you should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Mrs Meadus. Mrs Gunn and Mr Cawte are also trained DSL's and can support you. If a child makes a safeguarding disclosure, the Safeguarding Policy must be followed.

CAPTURING CHILDREN'S VOICE

- It's important to us that our children get a say in our mental health and well-being offer.
- We have Pupil Well Being Ambassadors who meet with Miss Wright regularly to express the views of classes.
- In addition, our regular Pupil Voice Conference gives all children an opportunity to tell staff what they think about our school, including mental health and well being.
- The school also participates in the North Yorkshire County Council Growing up in North Yorkshire children's survey which covers mental health.

WORKING WITH PARENTS

- Parents are an integral part of our Mental Health offer at Coppice Valley. We actively promote good mental health for all and make it part of our mission to further educate our parents, local community and beyond about the benefits of good mental health.
- Parents are always included in any concerns we have about a pupils' health. We ensure that parents have a voice and recognise their contribution.
- We try to support parents who are concerned about their children's mental health e.g. FaceBook support group, opportunities for "tea and a chat" with staff in school and facilitating links to external agencies.

THE ENVIRONMENT

- **Calm & Peaceful Classrooms** – our learning environments are set up to be safe and calming places for pupils to learn. We use neutral colour schemes so they are not over-stimulating. We use low level lighting and plants to create a sense of calm. Classrooms have timetables, rules and procedures displayed so that pupils can feel secure in the expectations within the room. Adults understand the importance of creating spaces that are conducive to good mental health.
- **Appreciating Nature & Beauty** – we've created places to nurture mental health in our extensive grounds. Our allotment beds, wildflower meadow, willow arch maze and wide green open spaces are used to foster children's joy and wonder.
- Our website page, Mental Health & Well Being is a good source of further information and ideas.