



PUPIL MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING POLICY

Reviewed: September 2023

Review date: September 2024

Policy Statement

At Canvey Junior School we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community. We recognise how important mental health and wellbeing are and feel it should be entwined throughout the curriculum.

Our school has a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued.

Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting pupil's well-being and can help develop a sense of belonging and community. Our role in school is to ensure that they are able to manage times of change and stress, be resilient, are supported to reach their potential and access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that pupils learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and where they can go if they need help and support.

At Canvey Junior School we;

- educate pupils to gain an understanding of their emotions
- create an environment whereby pupils feel that they can share their worries or concerns
- help children socially to form and maintain relationships
- promote self-esteem and self-confidence and feel valued
- support children to develop resilience in order to help them manage difficulties

Purpose of the policy

This policy sets out;

- how we promote positive mental health
- how we identify and support pupils with mental health needs
- how we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent mental health problems getting worse
- Provide support to staff working with pupils with mental health needs
- Provide support to pupils suffering from mental ill health
- where parents, staff and pupils can get advice and support

Links to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Medical policy, our attendance policy, our SEND policy in cases where pupils mental health needs overlap with these. Also our Safeguarding, Inclusion, Anti-Bullying, Personal Social Health Education (PSHE), Sex and Relationships Education (SRE).

Links with the Behaviour and Discipline Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need. We consider behaviour to be a message.

Ethos

We recognise that everyone will experience mental health difficulties at some point in their lives, we have an ethos which encourages support and respect for both staff and pupils. At our school we have an inclusive ethos which encourages support and respect for both staff and pupils.

We aim to recognise those in need and will endeavour to support them as best as we can, possibly signposting them to others who can help. We do not judge or blame, we act to provide a support network for those experiencing difficulties.

At the same time, we also recognise the importance of taking care of our own mental wellbeing, taking actions and encouraging others to include positive mental activities as part of a healthy lifestyle. Whether this is providing opportunities to talk to others, or take part in activities promoting mental health.

Leadership

The Mental Health Lead reports directly to the Headteacher and meets regularly with them to discuss the provision for staff and pupil mental health and wellbeing. The agenda for these meetings may include;

- Staff wellbeing provision and activities
- Pupil wellbeing provision and activities
- Parental engagement provision and activities
- Monitoring of identification and outcomes of pupil interventions

Promoting positive mental health

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help pupils become more resilient, be happy and successful and prevent problems before they arise. This encompasses seven aspects:

- creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience that everyone understands
- helping pupils to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to
- helping pupils to be resilient learners
- teaching pupils social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health
- early identification of pupils who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services
- effectively working with parents and carers
- supporting and training staff to develop their skills and resilience We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues and aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of mental health issues. We aim to be a 'talking school' with an 'Open Door Policy'.

Supporting positive mental health

At Canvey Junior School we are very aware that social, emotional and mental health needs can become very acute very quickly and can present large barriers to learning. We believe it is our responsibility to educate the 'whole child' to ensure that all needs are met and not just academic learning is prioritised. This means that by adopting a preventative approach to our personal, social, emotional development (PSED) curriculum, these SEMH barriers to learning are less likely to occur.

Outside agencies can sometimes be hard to secure and delayed in their intervention therapies, so we strive to bridge that gap between school curriculum and outside agency professional mental health support, as best we can through experience and sourcing professional advice. Individual approaches at Canvey Junior School can include:

- Meet and greet sessions with key staff members each morning
- Daily debriefs at the end of the school day with key staff members
- Use of 'safe-spaces' and 'yellow star' cards for individuals in lesson times
- Individual or class worry boxes
- Emotional literacy sessions
- Relaxation and anxiety interventions
- Self-esteem and resilience programs
- Social Communication intervention groups
- Therapeutic interventions where necessary
- myHappyMind program is delivered weekly throughout the school
- We are an Advanced Trauma Perspective Practice School

Early Identification

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- Identify individuals that might need support
- working with the School Office staff who are often the first point of contact with families seeking support
- analysing behaviour, exclusions, visits to the medical room, attendance and weekly behaviour reports
- Pupil wellbeing surveys throughout the school Year
- staff report concerns about individual pupils to the Inclusion Manager/SENCO and Designated Safeguarding Team
- worry boxes in each class for pupils to raise concerns which are checked by the class teacher
- weekly staff briefing for staff to raise concerns about individual children
- gathering information from a previous school at transfer or transition
- parental meetings
- enabling pupils to raise concerns to class teacher and support staff
- enabling parents and carers to raise concerns through the school class teacher or to any member of staff - we have an 'Open Door Policy'

Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil, or a parent/carer 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 with. Possible warning signs could include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / 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
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Continuous lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

Supporting and Training Staff

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identify mental health needs early in pupils and know what to do and where to get help. 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 developing situations with one or more students. Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing with relaxation activities such as mindfulness.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. What support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as common rooms and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking by ensuring pupils understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen next

Working with Parents

Within school, we tailor our communication approaches to meet the needs of different families. A member of our leadership team is always available to speak with face to face within school hours, and visible in the playground at the start and end of the school day. As well as face to face we can communicate over the phone, through Teams and via email. We can set up home-school diaries where appropriate. The priority is that parents feel comfortable and confident with the form of communication they choose and that all parties converse in non-judgmental dialogue. Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home
- Encourage all parents to access the myHappyMind app
- Ensure they are aware of the signposting that is available

Useful links

Young Minds is one of the UK's leading charities for children and young people's mental health.

Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families- is a charity dedicated to providing training & support for child mental health services

Place2Be is one of the UK's leading children's mental health charities.

Mind is the UK's leading mental health charity, offering a great deal of useful information on children's mental health.

Mentally Healthy Schools- Quality – assured information, advice and resources to help primary schools understand and promote children's mental health and wellbeing

Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) provide support to children and young people with a wide range of behavioural and emotional issues.