Thelwall Infant School

Children's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Governing Body approval date: Sept 26

Monitoring, evaluation and Review: 3 years

This policy is based around DfE recommendations set out in 'Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools' (March 2016) and 'Mental Health and Wellbeing provision in Schools' (October 2018).

Here at Thelwall Infant School and Nursery, we recognise that in order to promote a positive ethos in school, all children need the foundations of positive mental health to be able to shine both academically, personally and socially.

This policy aims to:

- Support the wellbeing of all children and the wider school community to avoid negative impacts on their mental and physical health
- Provide a supportive work environment for all members of the school community
- Acknowledge the needs of all members of the school community and how these change over time
- Help members of the school community with any specific wellbeing issues they experience

Well-being can be defined as 'state of being comfortable, healthy and happy.' Mental Health is how we feel, how we think and how we behave. Mental Health and well-being promotion for children and staff is everyone's business.

It is about:

- Being able to form and maintain healthy relationships with others
- Being adaptable to change and other people's expectations
- Being able to have fun with peers
- Being open to learning/ change
- Being able to develop a sense of right and wrong
- Being able to develop resilience to manage ordinary setbacks

All children and staff need to:

- Be able to connect with others by participating in group activities

- Know they are capable and able to achieve
- Know that they count in their world and can contribute to their community
- Know they have courage and can manage risks appropriately because everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable.

Everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable. At times, anyone may need additional support to maintain or develop good mental health:

- 1 in 10 children and young people aged 1 to 15 years have a clinically recognizable mental disorder in any one year.

Thelwall Infant School and Nursery recognises these needs and is aware of the risk and protective factors (see table below) and their relation to mental health.

	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
In The Child	● Genetic influences ● Low IQ and learning disabilities ● Specific development delay or neurodiversity ● Communication difficulties ● Difficult temperament ● Physical illness ● Academic failure ● Low self-esteem	● Being female (in younger children) ● Secure attachment experience ● Outgoing temperament ● Good communication skills, sociability ● Humour ● Problem solving skills and positive attitude ● Experiences of success and achievement ● Faith or spirituality ● Capacity to reflect
In The Family	● Overt parental conflict including domestic violence ● Family breakdown (incl. children taken into care or adopted) ● Inconsistent or unclear discipline ● Hostile and rejecting relationships ● Failure to adapt to a child's needs ● Physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect ● Parental psychiatric illness ● Parental criminality, alcoholism, or personality disorder ● Death and loss (including loss of friendship)	● At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult) ● Affection ● Clear, consistent discipline ● Support for education ● Supportive long term relationship or the absence of severe discord
In the school	● Bullying ● Discrimination ● Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships ● Deviant peer influences ● Peer pressure ● Poor pupil to teacher relationships	● Clear policies on behavior and bullying ● 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems ● A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health ● Positive classroom management ● A sense of belonging ● Positive peer influences

		● Opportunity for positive play experiences for all children
In the community	● Socio-economic disadvantage ● Homelessness ● Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming event ● Discrimination ● Other significant life events	● Wider support network ● Good housing ● High standard of living ● High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying ● Opportunities for valued social roles ● Range of sport / leisure activities

At Thelwall Infant School and Nursery, we are aware that certain difficult events may have an effect on a pupil's mental health including:

- **Loss or separation** – resulting from death, parental separation, divorce, hospitilisation, loss of friendships, family conflict or being taken into care or adoption.
- **Life changes** – Such as the birth of a sibling, moving house or changing schools, during transition between phases, or periods of home learning.
- **Traumatic events** – such as abuse, domestic violence, bullying violence, accidents, injuries or natural disaster.

All school staff are committed to raising awareness, increasing understanding and ensuring that we can and do make a difference by providing an environment where all people feel safe, secure and able to achieve and experience success and wellbeing. A distinctive feature of our school is the positive, caring and supportive atmosphere we have created and strive to maintain.

A consistent approach from our dedicated staff means that our school environment and school ethos all promote the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school community.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team

The wellbeing team are Alison Rostron and Jo Buteux

- Provide CPD and guidance to staff on mental Health and wellbeing in children
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Provide resources to promote wellbeing
- Monitor the wellbeing of children through pupil voice
- To undertake relevant training
- To raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing in school through initiatives, events and any other strategies that will help to promote good mental health and wellbeing

Role of the staff and governors

- Monitor and support the well being of the children and help to ensure a supportive and non-judgemental environment
- Respecting and listening to children and parent views, understanding the practical needs of others, and working as part of a team.

The children

At Thelwall Infants, we aim to provide a mentally healthy environment where children:

- Have opportunities to participate in activities that encourage belonging (PSHRE Curriculum)
- Have opportunities to participate in decision making
- Have the opportunities to celebrate academic and non-academic achievements
- Have their unique talents and abilities identified and developed
- Have opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Have opportunity to reflect
- Have access to appropriate support that meets their needs
- Have an environment that is safe, clean, attractive and well cared for.
- Are surrounded by adults who model positive and appropriate behaviours and interactions at all times.

Promoting Good Mental Health and Wellbeing through our curriculum

- At Thelwall Infant School and Nursery, we pride ourselves on the opportunities we provide to promote positive mental health for everybody, adults and children alike. Opportunities that arise from both within the PSHRE curriculum and the wider opportunities such as the School Council, all support our drive to raise awareness of Social, Emotional and Mental well-being among the pupils.
- Our Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policy as well as our link club provision, lunch-time activities, and after school clubs, all support and have a positive effect on the mental wellbeing of our children.
- Our Online safety curriculum ensures children treat each other with care and respect online and understand the importance of thinking carefully about how to communicate online.
- We place a high emphasis on the importance of physical activity and exercise in promoting mental health. Alongside the PE curriculum, we also promote 'the daily mile' and Opal play promotes healthy and inclusive playtimes. Adult play leaders are used to encourage team-games and enrich play opportunities at lunch time breaks.
- A variety of sports clubs run throughout the year to promote physical and mental wellbeing.

Parents and Carers

At Thelwall Infants, we aim to provide a mentally healthy environment where parents and carers:

- Are recognised for their significant contribution to children's mental health.
- Are welcomed, included and work in partnership with the school and agencies.
- Are provided with opportunities to ask for help when needed and signposted to appropriate agencies for support (DHT/SENDCo, Family Support Worker, Early Help, Wellbeing page on school website, information shared during Healthy School week)
- Are clear about their role, expectations and responsibilities in working in partnership with the school.
- Opinions are sought, valued and responded to (e.g. parent questionnaire, parents' meetings, SLT on duty each morning at the door, sharing of policies).