



Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing policy

REVIEWED: November 2024

NEXT REVIEW: November 2025

The World Health Organisation defines mental health as a state of wellbeing in which every individual achieves their potential, copes with the normal stresses of life, works productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.

Having gained Healthy School status, Holmleigh Primary School adheres to the national criteria which states: "a healthy school ensures that when pupils are unhappy, anxious, disturbed or depressed there are open channels for them to seek or be offered support, without stigma and with appropriate confidentiality. A healthy school actively seeks to promote emotional health and wellbeing and helps pupils to understand their feelings".

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing.

- emotional wellbeing – this includes being confident, happy and not depressed;
- psychological wellbeing – this includes the ability to be autonomous, problem-solve, manage emotions, experience empathy and be resilient;
- social wellbeing – this includes the ability to have good relationships with others and to avoid engaging in disruptive, aggressive or bullying behaviour (NICE, 2014)

At Holmleigh we know that positive relationships are essential for our pupils' mental health and wellbeing and a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing is necessary to support all our pupils consistently.

Staff play a vital role in improving the behaviour and wellbeing of all the children we work with. While many different factors can impact mental health, one of the most significant is relationships. Positive relationships with peers, school staff, and other adults can make a huge difference in young people's experience at school, both in the short term and the long term. We reinforce our values and pledges so children feel that they belong to, and are a valued part of our school community. Pupils should feel that their relationships with the adults in school are positive, consistent, and based on trust and mutual respect.

At Holmleigh Primary School we recognise that wellbeing is about holistic health including physical and emotional health. We aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community, and recognise how important mental health is to our lives in just the same way as physical health.

When we have good levels of wellbeing, we feel that life is in balance and that we can generally cope well. We feel motivated and engaged; we are resilient and able to deal effectively with daily troubles, as well as ‘bounce back’ from life’s challenges.

Through our wellbeing provision we aim to ensure pupils:

- Learn and explore the world
- Feel, express and manage a range of positive and negative emotions
- Form and maintain good relationships with others
- Cope with and manage change and uncertainty
- Develop and thrive
- Learn to be resilient

Building strong mental health early in life can help children build their self-esteem, learn to settle themselves and engage positively with their education. This, in turn, can lead to improved academic attainment, enhanced future employment opportunities and positive life choices.

At Holmleigh Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff, every pupil and school community. We will pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils and families.

We aim to help pupils to develop essential social and emotional skills through bespoke teaching sessions, assemblies; curriculum opportunities and enrichment opportunities which will cultivate these skills and enable pupils to understand and manage their thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. We recognise that in an average UK classroom, three children may be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures, we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly, by mental ill health.

This document describes the school’s approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors. This policy should be read in conjunction with our SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need or medical need.

This Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents

Lead Members of Staff

All staff at Holmleigh Primary School have the responsibility to identify when a child may have moved along the mental health spectrum and is showing signs of mental health difficulties however, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

Margaret Boateng – Head teacher and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Charlotte Gaylor – Deputy Head teacher and Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Gillian Jetto - SENDCo/ Designated Safeguarding Lead/Mental Health Lead Practitioner

George Bunting - Wellbeing and Mental Health in School (WAMHS) link worker

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Mental Health Lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSLs. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary. Where a referral to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Mental Health Lead and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing for Children at Holmleigh Primary School

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 PSHE curriculum which includes Citizenship and SEAL.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the curriculum and the specific needs of the cohort being taught, but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

Mental Health and wellbeing will also feature as part of circle time and assemblies.

Monthly Wellbeing Wednesday newsletters will be sent home and a number of parenting sessions will be available annually to ensure there is a supportive space to discuss common issues parents face.

Wellbeing in Class

Wellbeing is a priority in all classes at Holmleigh Primary School. There are displays and information around the School about positive mental health and where to go for help and support. In every classroom children use their Emotions Fans to 'check in' at the start of the day and 'check out' at the end of the day. Each class also has a worry box in which children can post a note if they are upset or worried about something, they also use the Zones of Regulation framework to support co-regulation when needed. As well as the PSHE lessons and Circle Time, children are encouraged to take part in daily workout sessions. Pupils also have access to the Holmleigh Primary 'Wellbeing Lounge' – an interactive PDF with activities, mindfulness videos and a library of story books to support understanding of the importance of understanding our wellbeing and mental health.

Wellbeing Week

In the Autumn term and Summer term we hold a Wellbeing Week in school. During this week, we learn more about mental health and wellbeing, and take part in a range of activities to improve our mental health – from exercise session and meditation to circle time discussions. The week focuses on promoting five key steps that can have a huge impact on our mental health and wellbeing:



Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools (WAMHS) project

The Mental Health Lead works closely with the CAMHS in school representative as part of the WAMHS project to develop a Wellbeing Framework Action plan for the school, which is reviewed termly. This ensures Wellbeing is a priority for the school and our approach to Wellbeing and Mental Health is constantly improving.

The Mental Health Lead also works closely with the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) worker do deliver a range of interventions to groups in school. These focus on topics such as managing emotions, friendships and dealing with change.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what sources of support within school and in the local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it. We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas, on the school website and by email.

Warning Signs

In order to successfully identify any mental health concerns all staff will be trained on understanding the risk factors that contribute to mental health difficulties and how to report concerns appropriately. Similar to the safeguarding and child protection policy, school staff should communicate any concerns about a child's mental wellbeing using a Cause for Concern form.

All disclosures and concerns should include:

- Date
- Full name of the pupil
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Actions to be taken

This information should be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will inform the Mental Health Lead, decide on the appropriate next steps and store the record.

A meeting between the DSLs, CAMHS in school representative and Mental Health Lead will take place at least half termly to discuss active and new cases.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a whole school issue. If we need to pass our concerns about a pupil on then we would in an age-appropriate way, discuss with the pupil:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents/carers for them or with them. If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents/carers may not be informed depending on the individual case, but the DSL must be informed immediately.

To ensure continuity of care, we will share information with the Mental Health Lead and DSL.

Parents and Carers

Holmleigh Primary School recognises the important role that parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children and in supporting children who have an identified mental health need.

Working with all parents/carers

To support all parents/carers we:

- Make our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing policy readily available to parents on our school website
- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website and through emails.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get help about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child.
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through information sessions.
- 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.
- Provide workshops for discussion around themes suggested by parents.

When parents have difficulty accessing this information e.g. due to the speaking English as an additional language, we will strive to ensure information is provided in a mode they are able to understand.

Working with parents or carers of a child with an identified Mental Health difficulty

When a mental health need has been raised for a child, we have a clear pathway for support and communication with parents. We understand that parents and carers may react in different ways to

knowing their child has a mental health difficulty and we endeavour to be both sensitive and supportive.

We will:

- Contact parents or carers and arrange a meeting with them (although there may be some circumstances where this doesn't happen, such as if there has been an identified safeguarding incident).
- Offer information that can be taken away
- Be available for follow up meetings or calls.
- Explain to parents about how they can help their child
- Keep parents and carers up to date on interventions / support given to child in school
- Support parents to access services outside of school, where appropriate.

Training

Staff will receive training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

We will share relevant information for staff who wish to learn more about mental health and wellbeing. When deemed necessary, we will host training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Staff Wellbeing

Holmleigh Primary School recognises that in order to support children's mental health and wellbeing effectively it is important to promote staff wellbeing. All staff have full access to Education Support Partnership: a service which offers advice, counselling and support to staff members for professional and personal problems. We also recognise the link between mental and physical wellbeing and provide free weekly exercise classes open to all staff. We also offer reflective practice sessions with our CAMHs worker in Schools (CWIS).

Role of all staff

All staff are expected to:

- Treat each other with empathy and respect
- Keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of other members of staff
- Support other members of staff if they become stressed, such as by providing
- practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let other members of staff know when they need support
- Contribute positively towards morale and team spirit
- Use shared areas respectfully, such as the staff room or offices
- Take part in training opportunities that promote their wellbeing

Managing specific wellbeing issues

The school will support and discuss options with any staff that raises wellbeing issues, such as if they are experiencing significant stress at school or in their personal lives.

Where possible, support will be given by line managers or senior staff. This could be through:

- Giving staff time off to deal with a personal crisis
- Arranging external support, such as counselling or occupational health services
- Completing a risk assessment and following through with any actions identified
- Reassessing their workload and deciding what tasks to prioritise
- At all times, the confidentiality and dignity of staff will be maintained.

Policy Review and Action Planning

We will write an action plan each year to audit and improve the school's wellbeing responsibilities. This will be done with the WAMHS worker.

We will talk to children and our stakeholders to collect meaningful information. This policy will be reviewed annually. It is next due for review in September 2025.

Links to external agencies

At Holmleigh Primary School we draw upon specialist expertise when needed to support with the mental health and wellbeing of children at both a universal and targeted level. These include:

- The Anna Freud Centre
- Hackney and City Safeguarding Board
- Children Social Care
- Educational Psychology from both Hackney Learning Trust and Positive Young Minds
- First Steps
- CAMHS
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Hackney Ark
- Young Hackney
- Re-engagement Unit (REU)

Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Additional Resources

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728892/government-response-to-consultation-on-transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health.pdf

<https://www.annafreud.org/media/4612/mwb-toolkit-final-draft-4.pdf> (toolkit)