

THE QUEENSWELL FEDERATION

EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELL BEING POLICY

Policy Written by: Spencer Clayton

Date Written: January 2021

Date for Review: January 2023

Rationale

Mental health is a state of well-being 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.
(World Health Organisation)

At The Queenswell Federation, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupils. We pursue this aim using workplace practices, universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health.

By developing and implementing a practical, relevant and effective mental health policy and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for staff and pupils affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. It is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

It should be read in conjunction with our:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (where the mental health of a pupil overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue)
- SEN Policy (where a pupil has an identified special educational need)

Equalities

At Queenswell Junior School we believe it is the right of all pupils, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, physical ability or linguistic, cultural or home background to have access to high quality learning experiences in stimulating and supporting environment where prejudice and stereotyping are challenged.

We recognise that certain groups and individuals may be discriminated against and therefore are strongly committed to positive action to remove and challenge discrimination in all aspects of the School and its work.

Aim of the Policy

At Queenswell Junior School we aim to create an environment that promotes positive mental health in all staff and pupils by:

- Increasing understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Providing opportunities for staff to look after their mental wellbeing
- Alerting staff to early warning signs of mental ill health in pupils
- Providing support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Providing support to pupils suffering from mental ill health and their peers and parents or carers
-

Responsibility

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil/student should speak to the DSL team 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 Head Of School. If the pupil/student

presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the School Nurse and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to MASH is appropriate, this will be led and managed by DSLs.

All school staff are encouraged to:

- Understand this policy and seek clarification from management where required
- Consider this policy while completing work-related duties and at any time while representing The Queenswell Federation
- Support and contribute to The Queenswell Federation's aim of providing a mentally healthy and supportive environment for all staff.

All school staff have a responsibility to:

- Take reasonable care of their own mental health and wellbeing, including physical health
- Take reasonable care that their actions do not affect the health and safety of other people in the workplace
- Raise concerns with their line manager if they feel there are work issues that are causing them stress and having a negative impact on their well-being

LMT & SLT have a responsibility to:

- Ensure that all school staff are made aware of this policy
- Actively support and contribute to the implementation of this policy, including its goals
- Manage the implementation and review of this policy
- Promote effective communication and ensure that there are procedures in place for consulting and supporting employees on changes in the organisation.
- Encourage initiatives and events that promote health and well-being
- Ensure there are arrangements in place to support individuals experiencing stress, referring them to the school's Occupational Health advisers where appropriate.
- Collate management information which will enable the school to measure its performance in relation to stress management and employee well-being, such as:
 - Sickness absence data
 - Staff turnover, exit interviews
 - Number of self-referrals to the counsellor service
 - Number of referrals to Occupational Health support
 - Numbers of grievance and harassment cases
- Seek the views of employees on the effectiveness of the School's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy and stress management arrangements using staff surveys and other appropriate questionnaires.

Managing Pupil Disclosures

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety, rather than of exploring 'Why?', staff should avoid asking any leading questions.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing on CPOMS and should include:

- Date
- Name of member of staff to whom it was disclosed
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the DSL team, who will offer advice about the next step.

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously, and communicated to the DSL team.

Possible warning signs to look out for in pupils/students or their immediate family:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends of family
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity or mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol in the family
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE/Games or getting changed secretly
- Lateness or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- Increase in lateness or absenteeism

Managing Pupil Disclosures

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety, rather than of exploring 'Why?', staff should avoid asking any leading questions.

All disclosures should be recorded on CPOMS. This should include:

- Date
- Name of member of staff to whom it was disclosed
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the DSL team, who will store the record appropriately and offer advice about the next step.

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously, and communicated to the DSL or DDSLs.

Possible warning signs to look out for in pupils/students or their immediate family:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends of family
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity or mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide

- Abusing drugs or alcohol in the family
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE/Games or getting changed secretly
- Lateness or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- Increase in lateness or absenteeism

Realistic Expectations

Mental health issues can be ongoing for a long time. They can be highly impactful on a pupil's ability to access school. We need to ensure that all members of staff are realistic in their expectations of affected pupils, to ensure those pupils are not placed under undue stress which may exacerbate their mental health issues.

Expectations should always be led by what is appropriate for a specific pupil at a specific point in their recovery journey rather than by what has worked well for others, so some degree of flexibility is essential.

Expectations to consider addressing include:

- Academic achievement
- Absence and lateness
- Access to extra-curricular activities including sport
- Duration and pace of recovery
- Ability to interact and engage within lessons

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/carers and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements or precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Emergency procedures
- The role the school can play

Confidentiality

We should be honest with pupils/students about confidentiality. We should let them know this and discuss with them that it might be necessary to pass the information on:

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

We should never share information about a pupil without letting them know. Ideally, we should receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another staff member and/or a parent/carer. This would always include pupils/students up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

If acting to safeguard a pupil/student against harm or look out for their welfare it is imperative to share any information you deem important.

In many cases, the parent/carers should be informed, and pupils may choose to tell their parent/carers themselves. If this is the case, depending upon severity and immediacy of risk, 24 hours should be given to share this information before the school contacts the parent/carers. We should always give pupils the option of the school informing the parent/carers for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parent/carers should not be informed, but the DSL team must be notified immediately.

Working with Parents/Carers

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parent/carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach. It can be shocking and upsetting for parent/carers to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset. We should therefore give the parent/carers time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information as parents/carers will often find it hard to take in much of the news that we are sharing. We should always provide clear means of how contact can be made with the school regarding further questions and the school should consider booking in a follow up meeting right away as parents/carers may have many questions as they process the information. We should keep a record on each meeting in the child's confidential record.

In order to support all parent/carers of children, we will:

- Ensure all parent/carers know who to talk to if they have any concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parent/carers
- Keep parent/carers informed about the topics their children are learning about in PSHE

Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends might need additional support. It is important to consider:

- What friends should and should not be told
- How friends can support
- Things friends should avoid doing or saying
- Warning signs to look out for
- How friends can access further support for themselves from the school
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be facing

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 the PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by 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.

We will follow the [PSHE Association's Guidance](#)¹ to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Monitoring & Evaluation

The Governing Body, LMT and PSHE subject leader are responsible for the monitoring, evaluation and review of this policy.

¹ [Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#)