



Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery

Positive Mental Health & Well-being for Children Policy

Name/Title of responsible committee/individual:	Curriculum and Safeguarding Committee
Date issued:	May 2022
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Target audience:	All stakeholders

The Governing Body shall conduct the School with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement.

Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery is committed to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between different groups. These factors were considered in the formation and review of this policy and will be adhered to in its implementation and application across the whole school community.

The School will promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and will actively challenge pupils, staff or parents expressing opinions contrary to fundamental British Values, including 'extremist' views.

Version	Date	Notes
V1.0	May 2021	Approved by Curriculum and Safeguarding Committees
V2.0	May 2022	Reviewed and Approved by Curriculum and Safeguarding Committees

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1 Introduction

At Merry Hill, we place positive mental health and well-being at the centre of school life. Our Vision 'A Happy Face, A Learning Place, A Growing Space' highlights the importance we place on *supporting every child's emotional wellbeing so that they are happy and ready to learn*. We aim to ensure positive mental health and well-being for every pupil, parent/carer and staff member.

We promote a positive ethos in school, based on the understanding that all children need the foundations of positive mental health to be able to fulfil their potential academically, personally and socially. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students. Positive mental health and wellbeing underpins our Behaviour Policy, which is embedded within our school culture and ethos.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and well-being, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and well-being policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

1.1 This Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and well-being in our school community, including pupils, parents and staff.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health and well-being issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to students suffering mental ill health and their parents/ carers
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues

This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

It should be read in conjunction with our **Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy** in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the **SEND** policy where a student has an identified special educational need.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with our **Safeguarding** and **Child Protection** policies should more serious issues arise.

2 What does Positive Mental Health and Well-being mean to Merry Hill?

Mental Health is how we feel, how we think and how we behave.

It is about:

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

All children and young people need to:

- Be able to connect with others by participating in groups and teams
- 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; everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable

The school recognises that, at times anyone may need additional support to maintain or develop positive mental health and well-being. The mental health and well-being of children, staff, parents/ carers and the wider whole school community will impact on all areas of development, learning, achievement and experiences.

Merry Hill believes that all children have the right to be educated in an environment that supports and promotes positive mental health for everybody. We 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.

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

3 Concerns about Positive Mental Health and Well-being

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead: Melissa Adams (Headteacher)
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Ben Reid (Assistant Headteacher)
- Mental Health Leads: Ben Reid & Fay Summers
- SENCO: Fay Summers

School staff could become aware of changes in behaviour, which may indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues.

These changes may include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or 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
- 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
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Any member of staff who has concerns about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Mental Health Lead. The Mental Health Lead will talk with the child and parents where necessary to put appropriate support in place.

This support may include:

- providing the child with a trusted adult they can talk to
- Zones of Regulation activities to support them in recognising and regulating their emotions
- creating social stories

- timetabling breaks throughout the school day
- read it 2
- drawing and talking
- sand play
- Lego therapy

Where appropriate, the Mental Health Lead may also suggest making an appointment with the child's GP.

On occasion, a referral to CAMHS may be appropriate. Any referrals will be led and managed by Ben Reid, the Mental Health Lead and Assistant Headteacher, or Fay Summers the SENCO. Guidance about referring to CAMHS is provided in Appendix A.

If there is a concern that the child is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures must be followed with an immediate referral to the DSL or Deputy DSL. If the child presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

4 Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our children to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum and embedded throughout our school learning community.

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

Mental Health and wellbeing is a focus within many class and whole school assemblies throughout the year. The message 'It's OK not to be OK' is embedded throughout the school so that children know that they can always talk about how they are feeling. All classes have a Zones of Regulation check in station where children are encouraged to reflect on how they are feeling and strategies to 'get back to green'. These zones are also displayed on the playground so that children can refer to them when out in our outdoor environment.

Class teachers monitor the messages children put into their class 'worry monsters' and where necessary, speak to the children individually about their worries or refer to the Mental Health Leads.

5 Managing disclosures

At times, a pupil may choose to tell a staff member concerns that they have about their own emotions or well-being. All staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

All staff should respond in a calm, supportive and non-judgemental way.

Staff should listen rather than advise and their first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded, where necessary on a CPOMS and shared with the DSP, who will monitor the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

5.1 Confidentiality

Staff must never promise the child that they will keep disclosures to themselves, and should inform the child why it is important that they pass the information on.

5.2 Informing Parents/Carers

Parents will usually be informed if a child makes a disclosure and staff need to be sensitive when sharing this with parents/carers. It can be upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and staff should give the parent/ carer time to reflect.

When working with parents, staff should finish each meeting with agreed next steps and book in a follow-up meeting or phone call. A brief record of the meeting should be kept on CPOMS. Staff should always highlight further sources of information where possible to offer support to the parent

However, if a child gives reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents may not be informed and a Safeguarding referral will be made.

6 Working with all parents/carers and the school community

In order to support parents/ carers and the school community, the school will:

- Carry out parent workshops to raise awareness of mental health and well-being
- Highlight sources of information and support on our dedicated Mental Health and Well-being page on the school website
- Provide information for parents through the school blogs
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to if they have any concerns about their child's mental health or well-being
- Make the school's mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Keep parents informed about the topics their children are learning about in PSHCE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home
- Liaise with our Family Support Worker to signpost parents to specific courses to support the family

7 Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health and well-being issues as part of their regular child protection training to enable them to keep students safe.

The school will also make information available on the school's website and the Mental Health Policy will be readily available to all staff.

The Mental Health Leads will maintain an 'open door' policy for all staff who wish to discuss any concerns or questions they may have.

The [MindEd learning portal](https://www.minded.org.uk)¹ provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

¹ www.minded.org.uk

Appendix A: What makes a good CAMHS referral?²

If the referral is urgent it should be initiated by phone so that CAMHS can advise of best next steps.

Before making the referral, have a clear outcome in mind. What do you want CAMHS to do? You might be looking for advice, strategies, support or a diagnosis, for instance.

You must also be able to provide evidence to CAMHS about what intervention and support has been offered to the pupil by the school and the impact of this. CAMHS will always ask 'What have you tried?' so be prepared to supply relevant evidence, reports and records.

General considerations

- Have you met with the parent(s) or carer(s) and the referred child or children?
- Has the referral to CAMHS been discussed with a parent or carer and the referred pupil?
- Has the pupil given consent for the referral?
- Has a parent or carer given consent for the referral?
- What are the parent/ carer and pupil's attitudes to the referral?

Basic information

- Is there a child protection plan in place?
- Is the child looked after?
- Name and date of birth of referred child/children
- Address and telephone number
- Who has parental responsibility?
- Surnames if different to child's
- GP details
- What is the ethnicity of the pupil / family?
- Will an interpreter be needed?
- Are there other agencies involved?

Reason for referral

- What are the specific difficulties that you want CAMHS to address?
- How long has this been a problem and why is the family seeking help now?
- Is the problem situation-specific or more generalised?
- Your understanding of the problem or issues involved.

Further helpful information

- Who else is living at home and details of separated parents if appropriate
- Name of school
- Who else has been or is professionally involved and in what capacity?
- Has there been any previous contact with our department?
- Has there been any previous contact with social services?
- Details of any known protective factors
- Any relevant history i.e. family, life events and/or developmental factors
- Are there any recent changes in the pupil's or family's life?
- Are there any known risks, to self, to others or to professionals?
- Is there a history of developmental delay e.g. speech and language delay
- Are there any symptoms of ADHD/ASD and if so have you talked to the educational psychologist?

² Adapted from Surrey and Border NHS Trust