



Mental Health and Wellbeing

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Why is Mental Health important?

In September 2020, about 1 in 6 children aged 5 – 16 had a diagnoseable mental health need. These needs can have an enormous impact on quality of life, relationships and academic achievement. In some case it is life limiting.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that “in order to help their child to succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy”. *Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools, 2018*

School 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 to 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 children’s wellbeing and can engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in the academy is to ensure that children can manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their full potential or can access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what effects their mental health, and how they can reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need support.

Our aim is to develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a school where:

- All children are valued.
- All children have a voice and are heard.
- Children have the sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Children are able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma.
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued.
- Bullying and prejudice is not tolerated.
- Pupils and their families feel supported.
- Pupils enjoy their school.

In addition to children’s wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and wellbeing.

Intent

At Norwich Road Academy, we aim to promote positive mental health for our whole academy community (children, staff, parents and carers), and we recognise how important mental health and wellbeing is to our lives, in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. All children go through ups and downs during their school career, and some may face significant life events.

This policy includes:

- How we promote positive mental health.
- How we prevent mental health problems.
- How we identify and support children with mental health needs.
- How we train and support staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent or address mental health problems.
- Key information about some common mental Health problems.
- Where parents, staff and children can get further advice and support.

Definition of mental health and well-being

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing

"a state of wellbeing 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 his or her community".

Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/young people to:

- Feel confident in themselves.
- Be able to express a range of emotions appropriately.
- Be able to make a maintain positive relationships with others.
- Cope with the stresses of everyday life.
- Manage times of stress and be able to deal with change.
- Learn and achieve.

Implementation

1. Links to other policies

This policy links to our: Safeguarding, Medical needs, Anti Bullying, SEND and Equalities, Outdoor Learning, Feedback, RSHE and PHSE policies. Links with the school's Behaviour Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need. Our Academy Ethos and Values, along with the Code of Conduct also supports our approach.

2. A whole school approach to promoting positive mental health.

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health. We aim to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses seven aspects:

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.
2. Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.
3. Helping children to be resilient learners.
4. Teaching social and emotional skills and awareness of mental health.
5. Early identification of children who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services.
6. Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.

3. Staff roles and responsibilities

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about the protective and risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as: long term physical illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They should also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy (see appendix 1 on risk and protective factors)

Our Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead:

- Leads and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing
- Provide advice and support to staff, and regular updates.
- Is the first point of contact with mental health services and makes individual referrals to them.

Our PSHE Lead:

- Leads teaching about mental health and wellbeing
- Oversees the curriculum offered in the academy that supports learning in how to be healthy and well.

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the academy environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there is a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to children with a mental health need and their families.

Sources of relevant support include:

- Our own Senior Leadership Team
- Our own Inclusion Leadership
- Our Safeguarding Team
- Our Key Stage Leaders

- Pastoral Team
- Our SENDCo who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with educational needs and disabilities, (SEND), including children whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.

4. Supporting children's positive mental health

Whole school

- Academy ethos
- Consistent expectations and Code of Conduct
- Promotion of individuals' self esteem
- Mental Health week
- Wellbeing week- whole school focus on doing things that make us feel good.
- Anti- Bullying week
- Internet Safety Week
- Extra-curricular activities
- Consultations with the Early Help Mental Health Team

Class Activities

- Supportive environment established in class.
- Use of the outdoors for activities and learning.
- Positive reinforcement of positive actions and behaviours, e.g. house points given for great behaviour for learning, kindness, consideration etc.
- Values celebrations and certificates awarded.
- PSHE learning
- RHSE learning
- Daily Mile

Small Groups

- Drawing and Talking
- Nurture groups
- Emotional Literacy sessions
- Forest School sessions

Individually

- Drawing and Talking
- Individual plans and support
- Feelings and wishes
- One to One counselling

5. Teaching About Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Through PSHE, we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that help children to be more resilient, understand about mental health and be less affected by the stigma of mental health problems.

EYFS & Key Stage 1 children learn:

- To recognise and name and describe feelings including good and not good feelings.
- Simple strategies for managing feelings.
- How their behaviour affects other people.
- To co-operate and problem solve.
- To motivate themselves and persevere.
- How to calm down.
- About change and loss and the associated feelings.
- Who to go to if they are worried.
- About different types of bullying, that these are wrong and unacceptable.

Key Stage 2 children learn:

- What will positively and negatively affect mental health and emotional health.
- Positive and healthy coping strategies.
- About good and not good feelings
- To describe the intensity of their feelings to others
- To recognise and respond appropriately to a wide range of feelings in others.
- To recognise that they may experience conflicting emotions and when they might need to listen to their emotions or overcome them.
- About resilience.
- How to motivate and bounce back and bounce back if they fail at something.
- How to empathise and be supportive of others.
- About change, including transitions.
- About consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours, (including online bullying, prejudice-based language), as well as how to respond and ask for help if they are victims themselves.
- About the importance of talking to someone and how to get help.

6. Identifying, referring and supporting children with mental health needs

- Giving children the opportunities to feel heard.
- Provide a safe environment to enable children to express themselves and be listened to.
- Ensure the welfare and safety of children are paramount.
- Identify appropriate support for the children based on their needs.
- Involve parents and carers when their child needs support.
- Involve the children in the care and support they have.
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with children and keep parents and carers updated.

7. Early Identification

Our early 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:

- SDQ (Social Difficulty Questionnaires) The Boxall Profile.
- Analysing behaviour, exclusions and attendance.
- Staff report concerns about individual children to the relevant lead persons.
- Pupil progress meetings
- Regular meetings, consultations for staff to raise concerns.
- Parental meetings in EYFS
- Gathering information from a previous school at transfer.
- Enabling children to raise concerns to a member of staff.
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns to a member of staff.
- Learning walks and monitoring.
- Knowledge from the work of our Designated Safeguarding Leads.

At Norwich Road Academy, staff can access regular professional development. Teams in the academy are kept updated via staff meetings and briefings. They will be vigilant in monitoring for the signs of a mental health concern.

These signs might include:

- Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in mood or activity or sleeping/eating habits.
- Falling in academic achievement.
- Talking or joking about self-harm suicide.
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope.
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism.

Staff are aware that mental health needs, such as anxiety, might appear as non-compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulty with learning, peer relationships or development.

If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the school safeguarding procedures are followed.

8. Disclosures by children and confidentiality

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non – judgemental to children who disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of our children is paramount, and staff listen rather than advise. Staff make it clear to children that the concern will be shared with the Mental Health Lead or a DSL and recorded following our procedures, to provide appropriate support to the child.

9. Involving Parents and Carers

Promoting Mental Health

We recognise the important role the parents and carers have in promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting children who do have mental health needs. Parents and carers need support too.

To support parents and carers:

- We encourage communication between our families and the academy.
- We will liaise promptly with any support or community information that we can share.
- We offer a team of professionals that can support with any questions that parents and carers may have.
- We organise a range of activities/subject cafés for parents to attend with their children.
- We can access the Intran service for translation.
- We provide information and websites on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programs and have produced leaflets for parents on mental health and resilience, which can be accessed on the school website. The information includes who parents can talk to if they have concerns about their own child and where parents can access support for themselves.
- We include the Mental Health and Wellbeing element of our curriculum, on the academy website.
- When children start school, all parents and carers are given out mental health and resilience leaflet that includes information on how parents can support their child's mental health and where to go to for help.

Supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs.

We are aware that parents and carers may react in different ways to knowing their child has a mental health problem and we will be sensitive and supportive. We aim to reassure by explaining that mental health problems are common, that the school has experience of working with similar issues and that help, and advice is available.

When a concern has been raised, the school will:

- Contact the parent or carers and meet with them
- Offer information to take away and places to seek further information.
- Be available for follow up calls.
- Make a record of the meeting in our records.
- Discuss how parents and carers can support their child and give advice.
- Keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support an intervention provided.

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger. We will make every effort to support parents and carers to access service where appropriate. Our primary concern is always the child, and in the rare event that parents are not accessing services then this is to be discussed with CADS (Children's Advice and Duty Service).

Supporting parents and carers who may have mental health needs.

We can offer a safe environment for parents and carers to share any information or concerns that they may have. All information that we receive is treated confidentially and in the interests of providing our pupils and their families with support. We can provide the skilled services of professionals on site, such as our Domestic Abuse Champion in addition to signposting to other services that may be able to help. If we have a concern regarding the safety of a child we will need to share our concerns with other professional support services, such as Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS).

10. Involving Children

Through our academy ethos we promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in the academy. We encourage pupil engagement and participation. Finding the child's voice is important to us and we will provide opportunities for children to feel heard. We monitor their engagement and wellbeing across the academy. Playtimes and lunchtimes should be active and enjoyable. Our pupil Play Leaders and Peer Mediators can support during these times. In addition:

- Every year we will run a specific week of Mental Health and Wellbeing activities.
- Children's views will be sought as part of the "how safe do you feel?" questionnaire.
- We will seek feedback from the child as to how they have felt supported following a piece of work.

11. Supporting and training staff

We want all staff to feel confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identifying mental health needs early in children and know what to do to get help. There are two Mental Health Leads one is a Mental Health First Aider And one who is a qualified Mental Health First Aider for both adults and children.

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 health work life balance and wellbeing. Wellbeing is on the agenda for every staff meeting and staff can have confidential consultations with the academy Mental Health First Aider and the staff have access to Health Assured 24-hour support service.

12. Monitoring and Evaluations

The Mental Health and Wellbeing policy is on the academy's website and hard copies are available for parents and carers from the academy office. All mental health professionals are given a copy before they begin working in the school as well as external agencies Involved in out mental health work.

The policy is monitored and reviewed by the Mental Health and Pastoral Team including specialist support services, Mental Health Support Team (Cambridge NHS) and the Academy Council.

Impact

Our approach to promoting wellbeing and supporting mental health should ensure that our academy is a safe and supportive environment. Any concerns that arise are identified early and our young people and their families can access support and early help. If we are unable to provide direct help in the academy, we can sign post to other agencies to ensure that young people and their families receive the right support at the right time.