



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY FOR PUPILS

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation		
Created	2016	School Counsellor, Vice Principal
Last Review	September 2023	Pastoral Leads, School Counsellors, Head of Compliance
Approved	September 2023	Education Board

This Policy applies to all year groups at Thomas's Schools, including the EYFS.

Thomas's London Day Schools operates as a united group of schools with a similar ethos and values and as such is referred to as a singular body.

This Policy should be followed in conjunction with Thomas's Behaviour Policy, Record Management Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, SEND Policy.

Staff Wellbeing Policy, Critical Incident

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern life has many opportunities and positive influences. However these also come with a number of pressures and Thomas's recognises the need to balance these two areas and to provide a safe and stable environment in which pupils can learn and thrive. During their time at the school we hope that pupils are able to grow in confidence and develop resilience enabling them to face challenges with purpose and achieve to the best of their potential. We want all children to:

- develop psychologically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually;
- initiate, develop and sustain mutually satisfying personal relationships;
- use and enjoy solitude;
- become aware of others and empathise with them;
- play and learn;
- develop a sense of right and wrong;
- face and resolve problems and setbacks and learn from them.

2. AIMS

The specific aims of this policy are:

- to promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all members of the school community;
- to increase understanding of common wellbeing and mental health issues;

- to alert members of staff to early warning signs of wellbeing or mental health issues
- to support support to pupils with their wellbeing or mental health and also their peers, parents and carers;
- to provide support to their pupils and families;;
- to provide support to members of staff working with children with wellbeing or mental health issues;
- to challenge stigma and stereotypes often associated with mental health;
- to recognise mental health as having equal standing as physical health issues.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Whilst all adults within the school community have a responsibility to promote the wellbeing of all pupils the Pastoral Lead is responsible for ensuring that all members of staff, are aware of the policy and the procedures to follow should they have any concerns.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1 Teaching about mental health and wellbeing

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe form part of the school's PSHE curriculum and across the broader curriculum. Refer to PSHE and RSE Policies for details.

All teachers ensure that mental health and wellbeing issues are taught in a safe and sensitive manner that helps rather than harms and challenges mental stereotypes. There will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the confidence to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

4.2 Promoting mental health and wellbeing

Activities to support children develop these qualities form part of our broader curriculum. These may range from those with a direct focus on mental wellbeing, such as mindfulness techniques, to others which build character and provide emotional fulfilment. Examples of these are music and cultural interests, our Outdoors Learning programme and other activities that encourage teamwork and healthy living, for example sport and physical pursuits.

Other attributes of wellbeing, both mental and physical, are promoted in day to day life, such as discussing healthy eating habits and observing that children are eating a balanced diet.

4.3 Raising awareness of mental health and wellbeing

Pupil wellbeing has a very high priority within the school and great value is placed on identifying pupils who may be facing particular challenges. Each school discusses welfare issues weekly and a confidential report is shared with teachers to enable them to be aware of any concerns, be they academic, behaviour or general welfare, and provide effective support at an early stage.

4.4 Identifying and responding to concerns about mental health or wellbeing

Members of staff (teaching or non-teaching) may become aware of warning signs that indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or wellbeing issues. In particular SEND pupils can be especially vulnerable. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and any member of staff observing any of these signs should communicate their concerns with the Pastoral Lead in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Early intervention is extremely valuable so all members of staff should remain vigilant. It should never be assumed that someone else is dealing with an issue; it is better for a concern to be reported twice than not at all.

4.6 Working with parents

Usually the Pastoral Lead will be the person to make contact with parents or carers following a concern or a disclosure, unless it is felt more appropriate for another member of staff to do so. Where appropriate, parents will be given further sources of information such as leaflets or links to supportive organisations that they can explore in their own time after the meeting.

The support required for each pupil will be particular to their specific need. It may be school based support or external support from a specialist practitioner. The exact requirements will be different in each case and should be agreed in collaboration with the parents during the meeting.

4.7 Emotional Literacy Support (applicable to Fulham and Kensington)

Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) are teaching assistants who have had special training from educational psychologists to support the emotional development of children and young people in the School.

ELSAs provide structured sessions (group or individual) to equip pupils with the skills to manage their emotions and feelings, and reach their potential educationally by overcoming any barriers to learning.

ELSAs will work with colleagues and share information only where appropriate or the pupil agrees. Where a pupil discloses information of a safeguarding nature, the ELSA will report this to the DSL in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

4.8 Counselling

In addition to the regular pastoral care offered by the staff, each of the Schools also has a qualified counsellor available to support children and parents as the need may arise. This provides opportunities for children to talk through their difficulties in a welcoming and supportive environment, and to find their own ways of addressing their issues. It is also of benefit to members of staff who can seek guidance in trying to understand and manage children and young people's behaviours and emotions in school.

Pupils or parents may request to see the counsellor, or sessions may be recommended by the school to support a particular or general concern. However, as pupils will only benefit from counselling if they engage in the process, it is essential that a pupil is never told that they must go to counselling – it needs to be their decision to start the counselling process.

The school requires signed parental consent for a child to begin counselling sessions. If a pupil over the age of 12 wishes to speak with a counsellor without parental consent, an assessment using the Fraser Guidelines will be used to decide if the pupil is Gillick competent and therefore able to access counselling without their parents' knowledge. The School would much prefer to work together with parents in the support of pupils so this would only be considered in extreme circumstances.

Counsellors retain records of sessions in line with the consent form and the framework of their professional body.

Records of any counselling sessions or wellbeing concerns/meetings will be stored securely in accordance with the School's Record Management Policy.

5. TRAINING AND RESOURCES

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training. Twilight training sessions may also be held to promote learning or understanding about specific needs related to mental health. These may be in-house sessions or from an external provider.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge may be considered as part of the performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year should it become appropriate due to developing situations with one or more pupils

Parents often welcome support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental wellbeing. The school responds to this by:

- ensuring the Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy is available to all parents;
- offering parent workshops and presentations on mental health and wellbeing issues;
- providing opportunities to meet with the School Counsellor to discuss any concerns they may have;
- keeping parents informed about the wellbeing topics their child is covering in PSHE lessons.

6. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This Policy bears due regard to the following statutory guidance and other advice

DfE Statutory Guidance Keeping children safe in education (September 2023)

British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapists

NICE Guidelines

NHS Summary of Key Findings of Mental Health of Children and Young People in England 2017 (November 2018)

DfE Departmental Advice 'Counselling in schools; a blueprint for the future' (February 2016)

Department of Health NHS Report 'Future in Mind' (2015)

DfE Statutory Advice 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions' (December 2015)

DfE Departmental Advice 'Mental health and behaviour in schools' (November 2018)

9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Resources and sources of support

APPENDIX 1: RESOURCES

- Childline
- Young Minds (www.youngminds.org.uk)
- Mind (www.mind.org.uk)
- MindEd (www.minded.org.uk)
- Samaritans (www.samaritans.org)
- The Survivors Trust (www.thesurvivorstrust.org)
- NACOA - National Association for Children of Alcoholics (www.nacoa.org.uk)
- SelfHarm.co.uk: www.selfharm.co.uk
- National Self-Harm Network: www.nshn.co.uk
- Depression Alliance: www.depressionalliance.org/information/what-depression
- Anxiety UK: www.anxietyuk.org.uk
- OCD UK: www.ocduk.org/ocd
- HeadMeds
- Place2Be
- Relate
- Kooth: www.kooth.com
- Emerge Advocacy (Surrey) <https://emergeadvocacy.com/>
- Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org
- On the edge: ChildLine spotlight report on suicide:
www.nspcc.org.uk/preventingabuse/research-and-resources/on-the-edge-childline-spotlight/
- Beat – the eating disorders charity: www.b-eat.co.uk/about-eating-disorders
- Eating Difficulties in Younger Children and when to worry:
www.inourhands.com/eatingdifficulties-in-younger-children