

Charlton Manor Primary School

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy



At Charlton Manor Primary School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils, staff and parents. We know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is a high priority and that everybody has an active role to play.

At Charlton Manor Primary School, we ensure that children understand that we all have mental health and need to look after it just as well as our physical health. We teach our pupils to recognise that we all respond in differing ways to our experiences with individual emotions, feelings, thoughts and behaviours.

It's also important that children understand how there can be changes in their bodies which are connected to their feelings and thoughts. For example, just as in PE, when our heart beats very quickly after we have been running, the same is true when we are excited, nervous or scared. By helping children with these concepts and getting them to think about how feelings and thoughts are linked to behaviour, we can then explain more clearly how these elements affect our mental health and wellbeing.

Calmly and confidently opening up conversations in our classrooms, dining rooms and playgrounds can encourage children to discuss, learn and understand that mental health is something we all have, and to develop the skills to look after and maintain it. Children learn that at times we may feel sad or may be struggling and at other times we overcome those feelings using strategies to ensure we can feel confident and calm. Most crucially, we can have open conversations about how to ask for help when we need it.

At Charlton Manor, we firmly believe that happy and emotionally secure children learn better. They are directly affected by their environment and who they come in to contact with on a daily basis. With this in mind, we believe in supporting the 'whole' child and our mental health offer includes children, their families and our staff. All our staff have regular training linked to safeguarding, supporting children's mental health and supporting their own mental health. There are clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health concerns, including routes to escalate and clear support systems within our school structure.

At our school we:

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
- help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries

- promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they matter
- encourage children to be confident in their own skin and understand that being different makes us all unique and special.
- help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks

We do this by:

- Creating and applying a consistent ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and wellbeing.
- Applying a positive, restorative approach to behaviour management.
- Helping children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- Helping children to feel comfortable about sharing any concerns or worries.
- Teaching children emotional skills and an awareness of mental health so that they understand their emotions and feelings better.
- Identifying children who have mental health challenges and planning targeted support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services, parents and carers.
- Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.
- Developing an open culture where it's normal to talk about mental health.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making.
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements.
- Providing opportunities to reflect.
- Enabling access to appropriate support.
- Providing PSHE and mental health education for all year groups.
- Promoting the benefits and opportunities for active travel to and from school.

Examples of different support we provide are set out below;

Children:

- Regular weekly PSHE lessons where children will share how they are feeling, current class issues or global issues.
- Worry boxes allow children to write down worries they may have but don't want to share out loud.
- Pupil voice surveys are carried out and analysed.
- Referral forms are available for teachers to refer children to the inclusion team for discussion about extra support needed.
- Learning mentors, safeguarding team, inclusion team and counsellors are available for children to speak to on a regular basis.

Parents:

- Food parcels given to vulnerable families on a weekly basis.
- Bought in extra CAMHs time to help support parents.
- 3 counsellors come in weekly to work with children, parents and staff.

Staff:

- Staff meetings scheduled throughout the year focused on mental health and wellbeing using CAMHs.
- Leadership have staff wellbeing scheduled into their leadership meetings, reviewing workload etc.
- Occupational health is a service which the school will refer the staff to if they need extra support either emotionally or physically.
- Employee assistance service which the leadership direct staff to if they need additional external support.
- INSET days are led on emotional wellbeing of pupils and how to tackle behavioural difficulties and the reasons behind particular behaviours.

Staff Training

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 in order to enable them to keep pupils safe. Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more pupils.

Early Identification and Warning Signs

All staff will be vigilant in identifying a range of possible difficulties that may be contributing to a pupil's poor mental health, including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstance
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

School staff may also 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 staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the designated child protection and safeguarding lead.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking about self-harm or 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

Assessment, interventions and support:

All concerns are reported to the designated adults within school and needs are assessed through a triage approach with SLT, class teachers and SENDCO to ensure the child gets the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service, as quickly as possible.

Working with parents and carers:

Parents or carers can approach their child/children's class teacher if they have mental health concerns. This will be cascaded to the Inclusion team and/or Inclusion lead for assessment.

To support parents and carers we will:

- Provide information online on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- Share ideas about how parents and carers can support positive mental health in their children.
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics taught in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this at home.

When a concern has been raised, teachers or the SENDCO or a member of the inclusion team will:

- Contact parents to discuss the outcome of any assessment (although there may be cases that parents and carers cannot be involved due to child protection issues).
- Discuss any relevant referrals to external agencies.
- Signpost parents to further information or provide resources to take away.
- Discuss how parents can support their child through strategies or signposts to parenting support groups.

Working with specialist services:

As part of our targeted provision, the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing. Children may be referred to one of the following services for additional support.

- Behaviour support through waterside
- Educational Psychology Services
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- School Nursing Service
- Therapists
- Family support workers

- Counselling services

Mental Health & P.E/Physical Activity

We recognise and value the role PE has in supporting physical and mental well-being.

Through high quality PE, children are not only provided with opportunities to challenge themselves physically, but they are also encouraged to take risks, develop resilience, empathise with one another as team players, build up confidence and practise social skills.

We believe these are all vital components for maintaining good mental health and self-esteem. We consistently encourage the children to consider and recognise the clear and proven benefits of regular exercise on their physical health and sense of mental wellbeing. All children receive 2 lessons of PE per week with a broad range of activities being offered (see the PE Policy).

The cost of sports clubs offered after school to support the PE curriculum are kept as low as possible to ensure all our children can access them.

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy will be published on the school website. The policy will be reviewed every two years.

Update due: July 2024