



## Mental Health and Well-being Policy

Name of School	Petersgate Infant School
Date of review	December 2025
Date of next review	December 2027
Reviewed by	Wendy Mitchell Headteacher

### School Vision

"for all children to grow into responsible, caring individuals who actively and positively contribute to the community."

At Petersgate Infant School, our vision outlined above is strengthened by our values of safety, caring, achievement, resilience and friendship. These values symbolise warmth, community and cohesion to ensure we are "working together to achieve our best".

As a school, we can apply these values through the following aims:

### Aims

1. Ensuring everyone stays healthy and safe.
2. Ensuring everyone feels valued and has a sense of belonging.
3. Providing a high quality learning environment.
4. Helping everyone enjoy learning and achieving their best.
5. Nurturing and developing the whole child.
6. Ensuring everyone makes a positive contribution to the school and wider community.

Safeguarding at Petersgate Infant School is carried out in line with the statutory guidance in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' published by the Department for Education.

## **1. Policy Statement**

*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)*

In our school our vision and values shapes all we do. Through our SCARF values of Safety, Caring, Achievement, Resilience and Friendship, we aim to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all our children, helping them to develop an understanding of positive relationships, have courage and bravery to stand up for what is right and embrace and respect one another's differences.

In addition, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable children. At Petersgate Infant School we want to ensure that staff are supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally. We recognise that staff wellbeing is important to pupil achievement and the school's performance.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for children affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

## **2. Scope**

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

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental health and wellbeing overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the Special Educational Needs (SEND) policy and statement where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and children
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and wellbeing issues
- Provide support to children suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

### **3. Lead Members of Staff**

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

- Headteacher - Designated Safeguarding Lead, Senior Mental Health Lead and Mental Health First Aider
- Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (SENDCo) – Supporting children with special educational needs and medical needs and Designated Safeguarding Lead. This member of staff is also the Personal, Social, Health Education Lead (PSHE)
- Inclusion Lead and Designated Teacher – Supporting children with social, emotional and mental health needs, as well as, Looked After and Post Looked After Children, Senior Mental Health Lead
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Lead – leads on Continuing Professional Development
- Family Support Liaison Lead – Designated Safeguarding Lead, support for families and pastoral care for the children through Emotional Literacy Support (ELSA), Mental Health First Aider and First Aider
- All staff are trained in Basic First. The school has dedicated members of staff who are full First Aid trained. We also have a member of staff who is trained at First Aid at Work

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Mental Health Lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection/safeguarding procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead team or the Headteacher. If the pupil 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. Where a referral to CAMHS or the Mental Health Support Team is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Senior Mental Health Lead or Family Support Liaison Officer.

### **4. Individual Care Plans**

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for children causing concern or who receives a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the child, the parents and relevant health professionals.

This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

## **5. Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing**

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/SCARF curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling children to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others. This will be delivered in an age-appropriate way as part of our spiral based curriculum for PSHE.

We will follow PSHE/SCARF Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms. Our long-term map for PSHE outlines the specific content taught.

Elements of emotional health and well-being are also taught through myHappymind, which is a bespoke programme for mental health and well-being. This is endorsed by the NHS and equips children with the knowledge and vocabulary to recognise their feelings, whilst giving them strategies to regulate.

Through our assemblies there is a strong focus on developing the children's understanding of the SCARF values, empathy and the Zones of Regulation.

## **6. Signposting**

We will ensure that staff, children and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to children within relevant parts of the curriculum and through our assemblies, in an age-appropriate way. We talk to the children frequently about who their trusted adults are and who they can talk to, if they need to.

Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking by ensuring children understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen next

## **7. Warning Signs**

School staff may become aware of warning signs, which indicate a child 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 Senior Mental Health Lead.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating/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 suicidal thoughts
- 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

## **8. Managing Mental Health Disclosures**

A child 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 to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'. All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the pupil's confidential file. This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the Senior Mental Health Lead, who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps. Where a referral to CAMHS or the Mental Health Support Team is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Senior Mental Health Lead or the Family Support Liaison Officer.

## **9. Confidentiality**

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we feel it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a child on then we should discuss with the pupil:

- 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 child without first telling them. Ideally, we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and/or a parent. Particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Senior Mental Health Lead. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the child, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the child and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents should be informed if there are concerns about their mental health and wellbeing and children may choose to tell their parents themselves.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying safeguarding/child protection issues or at risk of significant harm, parents should not be informed, but the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Headteacher must be informed immediately. The appropriate cause of action will be taken in line with our safeguarding policies and procedures.

## **10. Working with Parents**

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the child, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

## **11. Working with All Parents**

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

## **12. Supporting Peers**

When a child is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. 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 may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support
- Things friends should avoid doing/saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend help (e.g. signs of relapse)

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

## **13. Training**

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular safeguarding training in order to enable them to keep children safe.

We will provide relevant information for our staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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 developing situations with one or more children.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Lead/CPD Coordinator who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed and will discuss this with the Senior Management Team.

#### **14. Staff Health & Wellbeing Package**

Petersgate Infant School is committed to making sure that the Mental Health and Well-being policy is implemented so that each individual is able to cope successfully with the demands in their lives, whatever the cause of stress, this includes staff.

As a school, we aim to maintain a school ethos which fully supports staff health and wellbeing by making sure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently.

Petersgate Infant School is committed to promoting high levels of health and well-being and recognises the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors, stress management through an annual staff questionnaire, which will include questions on well-being. An appropriate consultation with staff will be periodically reviewed and acted upon.

As part of the Mental Health and Well-being policy, we aim to:

- develop a healthy, motivated workforce who are able to deliver a high-standard of education to our children
- help ensure that our school promotes the health and wellbeing of all staff members, recognising the impact work can have on employees' stress levels, mental and physical health
- recognise that excessive hours of work can be detrimental to staff health and effectiveness and to agree on flexible working practices where possible without damaging opportunities for pupils to succeed
- communicate the importance of a work-life balance to all staff and to ensure that all policy updates are communicated regularly
- respond sensitively to external pressures which affect the lives of staff members
- provide staff with training to deal positively with stressful incidents and provide them with a sense of confidence to deal with emergencies via training
- improve staff development, co-operation and teamwork by creating effective leaders.
- make staff members aware of the channels which can be used to manage and deal with stress of work related health and wellbeing issues

## 15. Role and Responsibilities

### The Governing Body:

- Will take overall responsibility for implementing this policy and ensuring that staff enjoy a reasonable work-life balance.
- Will adopt the appropriate policies in respect of 'family friendly' employment, including consideration of part time working, flexible working patterns etc., where this can be implemented without detriment to the operational requirements of the school.
- Will ensure that clear guidelines are in place that will minimise stress levels of staff when following formal procedures such as the Capability or Disciplinary Policy.
- Will review the demands on staff and seek practical solutions wherever possible.
- Will support personal and professional development.
- Will make regular contact with linked members of staff to ensure positive wellbeing is maintained.

### The Headteacher:

- Will ensure that all staff enjoy a reasonable work-life balance.
- Will support the governing body in ensuring that strategies are implemented to effectively manage and, where possible, reduce employee stress. This includes preventing unnecessary stress and ensuring that any work-based stress employees experience is at a productive, healthy level.
- Will adopt school policies and provide clear guidance regarding time-off for public or trade union duties, or for personal reasons. For further information, refer to our school's Managing Staff Absence Policy.
- Will ensure there is clear communication between staff and management with regards to all areas of school life.
- Will create reasonable opportunities for employees to discuss concerns and will enable staff to do so in an environment where stress is not considered a weakness.
- Will ensure that all staff are aware of the training in line with the school's priorities and offered opportunities for development.
- Will monitor and review any measures that are planned and assess their effectiveness.
- Will conduct risk assessment for work-related stress in consultation with senior staff.
- Will appoint a staff wellbeing team who is responsible for ensuring that the good health and wellbeing of all staff members is supported, promoted and valued by the school. The team will also ensure that the school policies and procedures reflect this aim.
- Will make individual interventions such as short-term rehabilitation and return to work plans and longer-term reasonable adjustments to work.

### **Staff Team Members:**

- Will make themselves aware of the school's policies.
- Will assist in the development of good practice and ensure that they do not, through their actions or omissions, create unnecessary work for themselves or their colleagues.
- Will ask their line manager for help or support if required. This includes understanding that a good relationship requires communication from both parties and so it's important that issues are raised at the earliest possible moment so that effective strategies can be put in place to manage workloads.
- Will identify opportunities for development and take advantage of those offered by the school.
- Will apply for any requests for leave of absence in advance
- Will share their views, ideas and feelings about all issues concerning the school at formal meetings and informal gatherings within school.

Furthermore, Petersgate Infant School's staff induction and health & wellbeing package include:

- Annual Staff Questionnaire, where there is a strong focus on well-being. Results analysed and shared with staff. Adaptations made following the analysis of results
- Introduction of a stress questionnaire, where results will analysed and adaptations made to meet the needs of the individual, where possible
- Well-being committee who meet to discuss key issues linked to well-being and put into place any key initiatives/events or support, where needed
- Signposting of mental health support around school
- Staff areas where staff can relax, work or support colleagues
- Ongoing improvements made to the site environment, including staff areas
- Staff induction programme:
  - Orientation by the Headteacher
  - All staff made to feel welcome and given as much support as they need
  - ID badge and access to other key equipment i.e laptops/log-ins etc to support their day-to-day practice
  - Safeguarding training annually for all staff and at staff of employment
  - Prevent training
  - Staff handbook and access to the school system where policies are made readily available within the policy folder
  - Regular updates linked to Safeguarding and Child Protection, which will support everyday practice
  - Keeping Children Safe in Education document
  - Teaching and Learning Principles document
  - Nominated person within their team who they can go to for support
  - Health & Safety training
  - Regular check-ins by the Headteacher and Senior Leader to offer further guidance, support and advice in the early stages when they join the school and beyond as required

- Improved performance management scheme for all staff
- Continuing Professional Development package to all staff related to performance management targets and the school strategic plan. INSET day training open to all staff
- An approachable, visible and supportive Senior Management Team and Governing Body
- Professional Development Meetings (PDMs) related to professional development
- Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time or Leadership time provided within work time and this can be taken at home
- Paid time off in lieu for the running of an after-school club
- Subject leadership time given within school time or during PDM's
- Weekly briefing – keeping staff up to date regarding key messages, events or areas of concern/interest to share. Staff can attend in person but detailed notes are sent out to all staff. These include safeguarding and health and safety updates
- Emails are scheduled in during the working day, no emails are sent or received during the evening or weekends
- Staff shoutouts given in briefing and shared with all staff. Staff can nominate each other. These shoutouts are kept in the staff, so all staff can read and have access to. These shoutouts are shared during weekly briefing and go out on the minutes
- Opportunity to feedback and contribute to the whole school strategic plan and direction of the school
- Social events set up by the Well-being committee, where possible
- Recognition of special occasions/events
- Governor Day given to all staff –recognition of the staff's hard work and extra time spent in school
- Introduction of ABCD Award (Above and Beyond the Call of Duty)
- A genuine culture of trust, kindness, empathy and collaboration

#### **16. Procedures for Handling Issues of Well-being**

- The Senior Management Team (Headteacher, SENDCo, Inclusion Lead, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Lead) must encourage the creation and maintenance of an atmosphere where all staff members feel comfortable asking for help or raising concerns. The Senior Management Team should be sensitive to any problems which may cause the employee stress-related issues and should act in a professional, fair, consistent and timely manner when a concern arises.
- Where additional, professional advice is required, the school has contacts with Occupational Health Professionals and Human Resource experts and these avenues should be utilised.
- Where necessary, staff should be encouraged to use the confidential counselling service signposted around school. This service provides staff with serious concerns to obtain advice and support outside of the workplace.
- The school will provide support to any employees facing high levels of stress in the workplace, as well as other work-related issues which are having/have the potential to have negative impacts on the staff member's health and wellbeing. The various options for dealing with such issues should be discussed with staff members where

appropriate. In some cases, this may include external support such as the teacher helpline or support from the Local Authority e.g. counselling.

- During this time, the school will ensure that at all times the staff member's privacy and dignity is respected. This means maintaining confidentiality, upholding the employees' rights and dealing with the employee with tact and sensitivity.

## **17. Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in December 2027.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to our Senior Mental Health Lead via the school email address [adminoffice@petersgate-inf.hants.sch.uk](mailto:adminoffice@petersgate-inf.hants.sch.uk)

This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.