



Denver VC Primary School

Mental Health Policy

Introduction

As a church school, our values are based on Christian principles, and we have an ethos of hard work and mutual respect. **Our shared Christian vision is:**

To seek to discover and celebrate whatever is good in each individual.

Discover – Value - Celebrate - Praise



Matthew 5:16

We aim to develop the whole school community, promoting the academic, social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and aesthetic aspects of the individual.

This is the starting point of all our policy writing so that we can encourage all members of our community to 'Let their light shine' surrounded by a safe, enabling and encouraging environment.

Formally adopted by the Governing Board of:	Denver VC Primary School
On:	6th December 2023
Chair of Governors:	Carole Reich
Last updated:	9th December 2020

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Policy Statement

At Denver Primary School, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of staff and pupils.

We believe that a strong emphasis on pastoral care is key to supporting the mental health needs of pupils and have sought to develop a caring ethos based on the values of kindness and respect. We value the contribution to school life of each pupil and staff member. We understand that creating an environment in which pupils and staff feel safe is central to the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and staff.

We understand that at times, the challenges of everyday life can mean anyone can experience feelings of anxiety, stress and vulnerability and that they may need help and support to overcome such feelings. We take the view that mental health and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility and we all have a role to play in ensuring pupils and staff are able to meet the emotional and mental health needs of pupils and staff.

At our school we:

- Help children to understand that it is normal to experience feelings of stress or worry at times.
- Help children to understand their emotions and feelings.
- Help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries.
- Help children form positive relationships.
- Promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they are valued.
- Help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks.

We promote a mentally healthy environment by:

- 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 develop a sense of worth by encouraging pupils to take responsibility for themselves and others.
- Providing opportunities to reflect.
- Access to appropriate support that meets pupils' needs.

We pursue our aims through:

- Universal, whole school approaches.
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties; for example, bereavement.
- Targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long term difficulties.

Scope

We recognise that the mental health and wellbeing of pupils is influenced and determined by many factors. We believe that improving awareness of the importance of mental health should be embedded within differing curriculum areas and policies and may be discussed in the context of different subjects.

This policy should, therefore, be read in conjunction with our Medical policy and our SEND policy in cases where pupils mental health needs overlap. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for Positive Behaviour, Anti-bullying and RSHE. We recognise that changes in the mental and emotional health of pupils may be indicators of external challenges or risks, and as such, this policy should also be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding policy.

Lead Members of Staff

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

Louise Jones: DSL, SENDCo, Senior Mental Health Lead and Mental Health Champion

Dawn Henden: Deputy DSL

Ashley Cawley: Mental Health Champion

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally healthy are included within, but not limited to, our RSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort. We recognise that in providing a broad and balanced curriculum, it is possible to discuss mental health and wellbeing in a variety of contexts.

Promoting and managing mental health and wellbeing for pupils:

The school will offer support through a variety of approaches and where necessary, targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- Targeted or specific RSHE lessons to address wider needs.
- PATHS lessons and resources
- Nurture club
- “Managing feelings” resources e.g. ‘worry boxes’ and ‘floor books’.
- Providing opportunities for therapeutic activities including art, lego and relaxation/mindfulness techniques.
- Gardening club for children identified as needing mental health support.
- Increasing the potential for physical activity outside of the classroom, for example, “The Golden Mile”.
- Maximising opportunities for discussing the importance of maintaining good mental health in the context of different subjects.

Promoting and managing mental health and wellbeing for staff

We recognise that the mental health and wellbeing of staff is crucial to the school's success and aim to support staff by:

- Ensuring time is spent during staff meetings to discuss mental health, wellbeing and workload.
- Creating an atmosphere of openness and support to ensure staff feel able to share their concerns.
- Ensuring adequate signposting is displayed in communal areas alerting staff to support groups and other agencies that can help with mental health issues.
- Discussing ideas to help with staff mental health/wellbeing and implementing ways to maintain positive levels of morale, such as the staff "Shout Out" board, wellbeing days.

Identifying needs and recognising signs/symptoms of mental ill health in pupils

School staff may become aware of signs or symptoms which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these signs or symptoms of mental ill-health know to raise their concerns with the SENDCo, Mental Health Lead, DSL or DDSL. Signs of mental ill health or emotional distress may include:

- A marked drop in attendance or punctuality.
- A change in the way a pupil interacts with his or her peers or the inability to form positive relationships
- A negative change in the way a pupil engages with learning.
- Becoming withdrawn and less interested in learning.
- Physical or health indicators; these may include tiredness or lethargy, rapid weight loss/gain, evidence of self-harming, a decline in personal care, becoming physically agitated.
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- Exaggerated, inappropriate or disproportionate emotional responses to situations.
- Negative behaviour patterns or a marked change in attitude not consistent with past behaviours.
- A change in family circumstances
- Recent bereavement

Working with Parents

We recognise that in order to meet the mental health and wellbeing needs of pupils, it is important to form positive relationships with parents and carers. In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website.
- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g. by sharing links or other resources on the school website.
- Encouraging parents to share concerns they may have regarding their child's mental health by ensuring staff are welcoming and parents feel supported.

- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents.
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in RSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

Working with other agencies and partners

As part of our targeted provision the school will where appropriate, work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- Educational psychology services or behavioural support.
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Early Help services
- Link and Point 1 services
- Supporting Smiles
- Just One Norfolk

Training

The school's Mental Health Champions will attend training events and cascade information to teaching and support staff and where appropriate, staff will receive updated information in relation to best practice in the context of mental health and wellbeing during INSET days.