



Foxton Primary School

PROMOTING POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING POLICY

January 2023

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Signed:	

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## Policy Statement

*Mental health is 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 her or his community. (World Health Organization, 2014)*

At Foxtton Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health for all staff and pupils. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health.

By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health.

### Scope

As part of our overall safeguarding strategy, this document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff, volunteers, visitors and governors.

Other related policies include:

Medical conditions policy  
Anti-bullying policy  
RSE Policy  
Safeguarding policy  
Positive Behaviour policy  
Attendance Policy  
Lone working policy

### The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils to enable everyone to thrive
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues to facilitate early intervention
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

### Lead Members of Staff

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

Janet Muir HT and Designated safeguarding lead

Lucie d'Heudieres Steps trainer, Mental Health Champion, deputy designated safeguarding lead and SENCo support

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the safeguarding lead. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated child protection officer. 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. Safeguarding protocols should be followed.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, the SENCo will advise and support families as needed.

# Pupils' Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health

## Individual Care Plans/Individual education plan/Individual Risk Reduction plan

Key vocabulary:

- An Individual Care Plan (ICP) is for pupils who require an individualised plan for intimate care.
- An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is for pupils who require significant additional or differentiated provision to make progress in their education.
- An Individual Risk Reduction Plan (RRP) is for pupils whose behaviour falls outside the scope of the school's Positive Behaviour Policy, and additional or differentiated provision in relation to their behaviour is deemed necessary for others' and their own wellbeing.

It is good practice to draw up an individual plan and to review regularly. This should be drawn up involving the class teacher, the pupil, the parents, the relevant health professionals and the SENCO. An IEP highlights learning targets and strategies used to support and may include emotional needs. A RRP identifies triggers that contribute to reduced wellbeing and reactive behaviours, and how we as a school work to prevent such behaviours through de-escalation, respond to them consistently, and restore relationships after an episode of difficult or dangerous behaviours.

This can include:

- details of a pupil's condition
- special requirements and precautions
- useful strategies
- medication and any side effects
- what to do, and who to contact in an emergency or if support is needed
- the role the school can play – whole school sharing key information
- existing roles played by other professionals
- identifying the gap and mitigate accordingly
- maintain good communication with parents

## Teaching about Mental Health

All staff have a responsibility to support social and emotional development, to build resilience and promote wellbeing through the wider curriculum.

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum, whole school assemblies and modelled by staff to establish a culture of safety and wellbeing.

The specific content of PSHE lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching, but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow the PSHE framework from the Cambridgeshire Primary Personal Development Programme to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner. If staff concerns are raised due to comments made by pupils during PSHE sessions, a Log of Concern may be completed on My Concern and passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead following safeguarding protocols (see warning signs and managing disclosures below).

## Signposting

We will disseminate information to staff, pupils and parents about sources of support within school and in the local community.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as corridors, offices and toilets. We will also regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum and during assemblies and to parents at e.g. information evenings. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking by ensuring pupils understand:

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

## Warning Signs

School staff may 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 by using safeguarding procedures. Concerns should be logged on My Concern for the Safeguarding Team to review and act upon where necessary.

Possible warning signs may include (but is not limited to):

- 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
- A change in behaviour
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Talking about family members that are abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Avoiding 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
- Difficult or dangerous behaviour

See Appendix B for further details

## Managing disclosures

A pupil 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 on My Concern. Children should be told that their information will be shared and therefore confidentiality must not be promised.

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

### Working with All Parents and Carers

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, agencies, and how to access 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 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
- Meet regularly to discuss any individual plans we have in place for their children in school
- Welcome them to come and talk to the teaching staff about any concerns they may have
- Discuss and support with referrals where appropriate

### Supporting Peers

When a pupil 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

### Training

All staff will receive training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular safeguarding training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe. As part of personal development, staff can request training on issues that would enhance their skills and knowledge.

### Universal support

- Whole school focus on values : Respect, Responsibility and Resilience
- Weekly buddy groups
- Reading/preschool partners
- Good quality PSHE programme of study
- Daily promotion of relaxation techniques – eg music, mindfulness, exercise (eg. 5 alive)

- [www.amazon.co.uk/Sitting-Still-Like-Frog-Mindfulness/dp/1611800587](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Sitting-Still-Like-Frog-Mindfulness/dp/1611800587)
- Simple mindfulness practices for children aged 5-12 to help deal with anxiety, improve concentration and handle difficult emotions
- Pupils can raise questions and concerns with any member of staff
- Small group conversations to address issues – Conflict resolution
- Small group interventions – YMCA structure, DV KS and JVB trained
- Modelled culture of tolerance and equality
- Consistent approach to behaviour management through our Positive Behaviour Policy

### Targeted support

- Small group interventions – YMCA structure, DV KS and JVB trained
- YMCA 1:1 play therapy – specialist provision
- Educational consequences to difficult or dangerous behaviours
- RRP and IEPs may detail individualised strategies to reduce anxiety

### Further referral

- Early Help Assessment
- Social Care
- CHUMS
- CAMHs

See Appendix A for further details

# Staff Wellbeing

## Purpose and Principles

The wellbeing of professionals working within the Foxtton Primary school is of paramount importance. Staff are the most important resource at the school. Without a personal sense of wellbeing, it is difficult to nurture wellbeing in others. Employers have a legal "duty of care" towards employees which requires them to manage and safeguard the physical and psychological wellbeing of their staff. Wellbeing at work is therefore essential if we are to reach our best potential and help pupils to do the same. There is a definite correlation between positive staff, pupil achievement and a school's continued improvement. Managing staff wellbeing and promoting a healthy work-life balance will help attract and retain the calibre of staff needed for an outstanding education system.

Supporting wellbeing of staff will:

- Reduce staff absenteeism and turnover
- Develop a more motivated workforce
- Deliver a challenging and ambitious education for our pupils
- Improve team work, staff development and co-operation
- Increase morale
- Improve staff effectiveness
- Support positive communication and therefore positive outcomes
- Provide positive role models for pupils.

Causes of negative stress at work can vary widely and include:

- Physical and emotional demands of the job
- Parents' behaviour
- Work load
- Work place bullying
- School environment
- Lack of professional development and learning opportunities
- Low morale
- Excessive change
- Culture of blame
- Striving for perfection
- Poor communication

There are many positive outcomes for staff in their varying roles and responsibilities. The dynamics between the highs and lows throughout the year are important in the overall balance of jobs staff do.

## Actions nurturing resilience

- Foxtton Primary school professional development has encouraged the discussions of challenges within teaching and work collectively towards solutions. The leadership team aim to develop a culture where it is acceptable to seek help if it is required and encourage mutual support.
- The wider management team work together to create a working environment where potential work-related stressors as far as practicable are avoided, minimised or mitigated through good management practices.
- Managers' and employees' awareness of the causes and effects of stress has been increased through training opportunities.
- Foxtton Primary school has developed a culture that is open and supportive of people experiencing stress or other forms of mental ill-health.



- There are a range of strategies for involving staff in school decision making processes. Staff are encouraged to voice their opinions such as in staff meetings.
- Professional development can be an effective way of boosting wellbeing at work and developing resilience in staff. Staff at all levels in the Foxton Primary school have access to continued professional development some of which forms part of performance management goals and objectives.
- Professional learning opportunities are encouraged within school throughout the school day alongside opportunities to attend relevant courses and conferences. Staff meetings provide opportunities for professional dialogue between staff members.
- The leadership team manage conflict effectively and ensure the workplace is free from bullying and harassment, discrimination and racism. There is zero tolerance of bullying and harassment, discrimination and racism
- Where workplace stressors are identified, risk assessment will be undertaken to help eliminate the stress or control the risks from stress.

### Promoting health and happiness

The school supports employee health, happiness and wellbeing by:

- The physical environment at the Foxton Primary school provides a positive working environment. If there are concerns, there are systems in place for issues to be raised and resolved.
- Perfectionism is discouraged, being the best you can be is rewarding but understanding when to leave a task is an essential skill.
- Working hours are monitored and staff are encouraged to take breaks as required by legislation.
- Ensure staff are provided with the resources and training required to carry out their job.
- Staff are provided with relevant safeguarding training and guidance to work collaboratively when dealing with stressful incidents including access to appropriate support.
- Review of work load and time spent on paperwork and systems, allows the leadership team to develop practical alternative solutions through the Foxton Primary school improvement plan.
- Appraisal reviews offer the opportunity for staff to discuss with reviewers any concerns regarding workload.
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own work and effectiveness as a means of reducing their own stress and that of their colleagues.
- Engaging with staff to create constructive and effective working partnerships both within teams and across the School.
- Staff achievements are valued and acknowledged by the leadership team e.g. during staff briefings. There is a culture of inspiring and celebrating at the Foxton Primary school.
- Staff are offered quiet spaces where they can work. The staffroom is a welcoming space during break and lunch time.
- Staff are encouraged to experience new things and develop new skills through professional responsibilities.
- New staff are supported with appropriate induction training.
- Ensuring that patterns of meetings are appropriate to the requirements of the whole school and published in advance.
- Peer observation will be actively encouraged and the system of 'lesson study' will encourage shared development of effective teaching practice.

### Employees have a duty to support their own health and wellbeing by:

- Staff are encouraged to be mindful of their personal work life balance. Work life balance is key for those wanting to reduce negative stress.
- Taking reasonable care of their own health and safety at work co-operating and follow any reasonable instructions to safeguard their health and safety and seeking guidance from health professionals where appropriate
- Cooperating with Foxton Primary school in any measures taken to improve their psychological wellbeing

- Cooperating with Foxtton Primary school if Foxtton Primary school wishes to seek further information to support their wellbeing.
- Access to 24hr support can be found via the Employee Assistance Programme  
0800 030 5182, [www.healthassuredeap.co.uk](http://www.healthassuredeap.co.uk)

### Managing staff absence

Staff absence is dealt with through the 'Discretionary leave policy' and 'Management of Sickness and Absence policy' as advised by EPM.

- Foxtton Primary school responds sensitively and flexibly to external pressures that impact on staff lives whilst also ensuring the efficient running of the Foxtton Primary school.
- Foxtton Primary school will provide support and discuss options as appropriate if problems arise for staff. In some cases this might include external support e.g. from the Local Authority for counselling, occupational health etc. Foxtton Primary school will continue to support even when external services are involved.
- During the time staff are absent, Foxtton Primary school will maintain confidentiality and the rights and dignity of the staff involved.

### Related Policies

The Governing Body takes very seriously its duty of care as an employer to all members of staff and a number of policies and procedures have been made in relation to this duty.

These include:

- Guidance for Safer Working Practice
- eSafety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Equality of Opportunity Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

Other policies contribute to staff wellbeing by providing certainty, fairness and consistency in the treatment of staff in different contexts, including:

- Management of sickness and absence policy
- Discretionary leave policy
- Disciplinary and capability Procedures
- Pay Policy
- Performance Management Policies for Teaching and Support Staff
- Whistle blowing policy.

**Keep Your Head** <https://www.keep-your-head.com/> is a very useful site to further signpost all sorts or help

## Appendix A: Referrals and External Agencies

### YMCA

At Foxton, our current provider of one to one and group play therapy is YMCA Trinity Group. Typically, referrals are initiated by the SENCo in discussion with staff and parents on children's current state of mental health and wellbeing. The episodes of care typically last one term, though these are agreed upon on a case by case basis. For further information, see <https://ymcatrinitygroup.org.uk/about-us/>

### Emotional health and Well Being service

The Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service [ccs.ehw@nhs.net](mailto:ccs.ehw@nhs.net)

The team comprises nine Emotional Health and Wellbeing (EHW) Practitioners who can support schools in responding to children and young people who have EHW needs but who either do not meet thresholds for targeted or specialist interventions, or who are not yet ready to engage productively with them. This can include; signposting; advice and consultation; support with planning to make adjustments for their in-school experience that will contain distress and prevent deterioration, and assistance with reviewing these measures; support with referrals to the wider emotional health and wellbeing services available for children, young people and families. They work closely with the Early help Hubs and the CAMH Single Point of Access (SPA). Contact via email or by phone, 9.30-16.30pm. 0300 55 50 60

### CHUMS

CHUMS Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Service - Offers support to children and young people with mild to moderate mental health difficulties, such as anxiety and low mood, as well as those with significant emotional wellbeing difficulties arising from life events such as bereavement and bullying. Support is offered in a variety of ways including group support, one-to-one interventions, recreational therapeutic programmes (football and music as engagement tools), advice and guided self-help. You can make a referral via the website <http://chums.uk.com/cambs-referral-forms> and one of their triage team will contact you to discuss in more detail. For further information contact Cambridgeshire (0330 0581 659) or Peterborough (0330 0581 657)

### CAMHS

**Community CAMH service** [www.cpft.nhs.uk](http://www.cpft.nhs.uk). The service is accessed through the Single Point of Access (SPA) Tel 01480 428115 Office hours, Mon-Fri 9.00 – 17.00. Email [accesscamhs@nhs.net](mailto:accesscamhs@nhs.net) The Cambridgeshire Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) provides assessment and treatment for children and young people up to the age of 17 living in Cambridgeshire who are experiencing emotional and behavioural problems and eating or neurodevelopmental disorders, and support for their families. Professional referrals up to 17th birthday (18th birthday for Learning Disabilities and Eating Disorders). Before making a formal referral, it is strongly recommended that you call the **SPA** for a telephone consultation. This service is offered to all professionals considering a referral to Community CAMHS or seeking an opinion regarding a particular child, young person or family with whom they are working.

The **Single Point of Access** staff can advise on:

- whether Community CAMHS can help
- how to make a referral
- what further information the service needs
- the timescale for being seen
- what support might be helpful pending the first appointment.

If, after discussion, Community CAMHS is not the right service, the team will be able to advise on other sources of help.

**Useful websites:**

<https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/inclusion-and-ehwb/anxiety-based-school-avoidance/support-for-parents>  
<https://www.keep-your-head.com/>  
<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/>  
<https://www.whole.org.uk/primary-schools-download/>

**Pinpoint** [www.pinpoint-cambs.org.uk](http://www.pinpoint-cambs.org.uk) **Cambridgeshire** is a charity supporting parents and carers, especially those with children with additional needs and disabilities. It provides information, support groups, respite. By phone 01480 499043. By text 07973 248528. By email: [information@pinpoint-cambs.org.uk](mailto:information@pinpoint-cambs.org.uk) the office is at 4 Meadow Park, Meadow Lane, St Ives PE27 4LG (office hours)

**Referrals for parental support can be made to:**

### **Early Help**

The aim of Early Help is to provide help for children and families when problems start to emerge or when there is a strong likelihood that problems will emerge in the future. This means providing support early in the identification and development of a problem. The Early Help Co-ordinators in the Early Help Hub can provide advice and information and support with signposting to services including allocation from one of the seven new County Council District Early Help teams which have replaced the Locality teams. They can also advise professionals about completion of an Early Help Assessment - which has replaced the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in Cambridgeshire – and about subsequent Team Around the Family plans and review processes.

### **Social care**

<http://www.safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/children-board/reporting-concerns/>

Cambridgeshire children: 0345 045 5203

## **Appendix B: Information about mental health issues**

### **Self-harm**

Self-harm describes any behaviour where a young person causes harm to themselves in order to cope with thoughts, feelings or experiences they are not able to manage in any other way. It most frequently takes the form of cutting, burning or non-lethal overdoses in adolescents, while younger children and young people with special needs are more likely to pick or scratch at wounds, pull out their hair or bang or bruise themselves.

### **Depression**

Ups and downs are a normal part of life for all of us, but for someone who is suffering from depression these ups and downs may be more extreme. Feelings of failure, hopelessness, numbness or sadness may invade their day-to-day life over an extended period of weeks or months, and have a significant impact on their behaviour and ability and motivation to engage in day-to-day activities.

### **Anxiety, panic attacks and phobias**

Anxiety can take many forms in children and young people, and it is something that each of us experiences at low levels as part of normal life. When thoughts of anxiety, fear or panic are repeatedly present over several weeks or months and/or they are beginning to impact on a young person's ability to access or enjoy day-to-day life, intervention is needed.

### **Obsessions and compulsions**

Obsessions describe intrusive thoughts or feelings that enter our minds which are disturbing or upsetting; compulsions are the behaviours we carry out in order to manage those thoughts or feelings. For example, a

young person may be constantly worried that their house will burn down if they don't turn off all switches before leaving the house. They may respond to these thoughts by repeatedly checking switches, perhaps returning home several times to do so. Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) can take many forms – it is not just about cleaning and checking.

### **Suicidal feelings**

Young people may experience complicated thoughts and feelings about wanting to end their own lives. Some young people never act on these feelings though they may openly discuss and explore them, while other young people die suddenly from suicide apparently out of the blue.

### **Eating problems**

Food, weight and shape may be used as a way of coping with, or communicating about, difficult thoughts, feelings and behaviours that a young person experiences day to day. Some young people develop eating disorders such as anorexia (where food intake is restricted), binge eating disorder and bulimia nervosa (a cycle of bingeing and purging). Other young people, particularly those of primary or preschool age, may develop problematic behaviours around food including refusing to eat in certain situations or with certain people. This can be a way of communicating messages the child does not have the words to convey.