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**Mental Health and Emotional Well-being Policy**

**Policy Statement**

At Pinders School we are committed to supporting the mental health and emotional well-being of our staff, pupils and the wider school community.

We understand that everyone experiences life challenges that can, at times, make us vulnerable and additional emotional support may be required during these periods.

We all have a role to play in promoting and supporting positive mental health and recognise that developing resilience and using coping strategies early on is vital to ensure good mental health can be retained/ restored quickly.

**School Definition of mental health:**

Mental Health-A state of mind and well being that enables us to respond to challenges. It affects how we think, feel and act. It also helps determine how well we handle stress, relate to others and make choices. This state of mind is shaped by protective factors and risk factors which can alter our mental health at any point.

**Intent**

Pinders Primary School is passionate about making a difference to the lives of young people. We believe in teamwork; working with each other, with teachers and colleagues across the school, with the wider school community and most importantly with the young people in our school. We act with determination. Whatever issues our students, their families, the school, our team or the community face, we always support, react and pull together. Finally, we are committed to making a difference; we are not passive players in young people’s lives but active participants who can and do make a real difference.

Mental health affects all aspects of life and behaviour.

Our moral purpose can therefore be summarised below -

* Teamwork.
* Determination.
* Commitment

At Pinders Primary we aim to influence pupil mental well-being through:

* Providing a supportive culture, ethos and environment that can serve as a buffer to difficult circumstances.
* Teaching and learning that help pupils to build important life skills, through RSHE & PSHE strategies such as learning to learn, habits of mind and the growth mindset.
* Supporting the development of skills and character traits such as self-management, compassion and team work (e.g. as part of our RSHE & PSHE education);
* Partnerships with parents/carers and the wider community.

**Safeguarding**

Pinders Primary School fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support pupils in school and beyond. We are fully committed to safeguarding our pupils through prevention, protection and support. We are also committed to actively promoting the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; the pupils are encouraged to develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain. It is our duty to protect children and young people against the messages of all violent extremism and to prevent terrorism. Any concerns should be referred to the Designated Child Protection Person who have local contact details for PREVENT.

There is a ***universal***nature to mental health and all pupils have the right to learn and understand their mental health.

**At Pinders Primary School we support all pupils by:**

* helping them to understand their emotions and feelings better
* helping them feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
* supporting them with communication and social skills to interact, form and build relationships
* promoting self-esteem and ensuring they know that they count and their views/ opinions matter
* encouraging them to be confident, embrace their differences and celebrate who they are
* working with them to develop emotional resilience and develop coping strategies to manage setbacks.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

* Promoting our school vision and values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
* Providing a dedicated mental health and emotional well-being webpage
* Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making.
* Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements.
* Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others.
* Providing opportunities to reflect.
* Access to appropriate support that meets needs.
* Whole school mental health days
* Enhanced outdoor provision with dedicated Midday supervisors
* Access to sensory room and garden.

**We pursue our aims through:**

1. **Universal, whole school approaches**- To meet the needs of all our pupils, as outlined above, through our overall   ethos and our wider curriculum offer.
2. **Additional support**- For those who may have short term needs and those who may have been made vulnerable by life experiences such as bereavement.
3. **Targeted/specialised support**- For pupils who need more differentiated/targeted ongoing support and resources or specific targeted interventions such as wellbeing groups or personal mentor time.

**Universal, whole school Support:**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental RSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we’re teaching but we will also use PSHE Association guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

**Additional support** - we seek to understand problems by looking at the individual’s history and context. Needs are then responded to by developmental therapies and interventions. e.g. talking therapies, bereavement support

**Targeted support**

For pupils who need more differentiated/targeted support, the school or outside agencies will offer support through tailored approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

* Circle time approaches or ‘circle of friends’ activities.
* Targeted use of 1:1 mental health and well-being support
* Managing feelings resources e.g. ‘worry boxes’
* Happiness boxes
* Managing emotions resources
* Mental health and wellbeing groups
* Therapeutic activities including art, lego and relaxation and mindfulness .

**Identifying needs and 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 with SLT and our mental health and emotional well -being leaders.

Possible warning signs include:

* Attendance
* Punctuality
* Relationships
* Approach to learning
* Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
* Negative behaviour patterns
* Family circumstances
* Recent bereavement
* Health indicators - 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 suicide
* Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
* Secretive behaviour
* An increase in lateness or absenteeism

**Working with Parents**

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. through parent forums.
* Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their child.
* 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 work with other agencies to support children’s emotional health and wellbeing including:

* The school nurse
* Educational psychology services
* Early Help hub
* Paediatricians
* Mental Health services
* Counselling services
* Family support workers
* Therapists

**Supporting staff to positive mental health and wellbeing**

The Governing Body’s ‘duty of care’ towards employees, legislation and case law, require them to manage and safeguard the physical and psychological well-being of the school’s employees.

To help meet these objectives, the School has adopted:

* the attendance management policy and procedure which provides a framework with clear milestones enabling SLT to effectively manage attendance;
* the health and safety policy which provides a framework for, and measurement of, safe places of work; and
* this Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy which focuses on the School’s obligations to supporting staff’s health and wellbeing.

The Governing Body will continue to promote and work towards performance improvement and efficiency, getting the very best from our staff, retaining and attracting the people who are best skilled and well-motivated.

Wellbeing in the workplace is relevant to all employees and everyone can contribute to improved wellbeing at work. Addressing workplace wellbeing can help strengthen the positive, protective factors of employment, reduce the risk factors for mental ill health and improve general health.

To fulfil this commitment the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team will:

* Make health and wellbeing a core priority with a named governor taking on this role. Value the strategic importance and benefits of a healthy workplace. We will encourage a consistent, positive approach to all staff health and wellbeing.
* Make clear the link between employees' health and wellbeing and improved performance.
* Ensure all leaders at Pinders, including Senior leaders and Governors, are committed to the health and wellbeing of staff and act as good role models.
* Make communication clear to ensure that staff have realistic expectations of what's possible, practical and affordable.
* Be aware that a return to work from sickness does not necessarily indicate that an employee's health and wellbeing has improved.
* Have a proactive and visible commitment to health and safety and its role in improving the health and wellbeing of staff.
* Create a supportive environment that enables employees to be proactive when and if possible to protect and enhance their own health and well-being
* Seek to identify potential circumstances that may affect the well-being of staff and conduct risk assessments;
* increase awareness and understanding of how to promote well-being at work and the avoidance of absence;
* ensure advice and guidance is available to leaders in dealing with well-being concerns of staff;
* ensure that there is a culture where there is no expectation that staff communicate about work outside of normal working hours (except in an emergency, e.g. child protection issues);
* ensure that all staff take part in a supportive performance management process;

Where possible, staff are supported with their work/life balance and well-being outside the school. Examples of this could include providing staff with paid leave in line with policy.

All staff are encouraged to take a responsible approach to health and well-being issues, including adopting a robust self-management to their own health.

**Signposting**

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support. Support includes: CAMHS, Younger Minds, GPs, School Nurses and a number of voluntary organisations

**Lead Members of Staff**

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

* Designated child protection / safeguarding officers
* Mental Health and Emotional wellbeing lead
* Mental Health first Aider