



Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

This policy is applicable for both staff and students.

Policy Written By: Sasha Palmer and Michelle Bryce

Policy Reviewed: 01/2022

Review Date: 02/2023

Policy: Curriculum and School

Governors: No



This policy is written to support both the staff and students at Finlay Community School and is reflective of our whole school vision and values.

Our Whole School Curriculum Intent

At Finlay, we intend to teach a curriculum that is engaging, relevant and purposeful to all learners. We ensure that our curriculum allows all pupils to achieve and succeed in line with National expectations. We aim for our curriculum to allow all children to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in line with the National Curriculum (Key Stage 1 and 2) and the Early Years Framework (Pre-School and Reception)

In addition to this, we have identified five core values which are integral to the learning experiences we provide for all of our children. We therefore aspire for our curriculum to allow pupils at Finlay Community School to leave with a **SMILE:** Social Awareness, Mental and Physical Health and Wellbeing, Independence, Life Skills and Excellent Aspirations.

What is Mental Health and Wellbeing?

The World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing 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".

1. Intent (Mental Health and Wellbeing)

Children/Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing

At Finlay, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. All children go through ups and downs during their school career and some face significant life events. Statistics show that in 2017, about 1 in 10 children aged 5 to 16 had a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on quality of life, relationships and academic achievement. In many cases it is life-limiting.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy". Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting children's wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

We intend to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a school where:



- All children are valued.
- Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma.
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued.
- Bullying is not tolerated. (Please see our Antibullying and Hate policy for more information).

Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/young people to:

- Feel confident in themselves.
- Be able to express a range of emotions appropriately.
- Be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others.
- Cope with the stresses of everyday life.
- Manage times of stress and be able to deal with change.
- Learn and achieve.

In addition to children's wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and wellbeing.

Staff's Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Governing Body and school's Senior Leaders acknowledge the potential impact that work has on an individual's physical and mental health. We are committed to fostering a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect, where all individuals are treated with fairness and dignity, and can work at their optimum level.

We intend to:

- Create a working environment where potential work related stressors are understood and mitigated as far as practically possible through good management practices, effective Human Resources policies and staff development.
- Develop a culture that is open and supportive of people experiencing stress or other forms of mental ill-health.
- Engage with staff to create constructive and effective working partnerships, both within teams and across the school.
- Establish working arrangements whereby staff feel they are able to maintain an appropriate work life balance.
- Encourage staff to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing through effective health promotion programmes and initiatives.
- Encourage staff to take responsibility for their own work effectiveness as a means of reducing their own stress and that of their colleagues.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues.

2. Implementation (Pupils):



We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses seven aspects:

- Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.
- Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.
- Helping children to be resilient learners.
- Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
- Early identification of children who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services.
- Effectively working with parents and carers.
- Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.

2.1. How is Mental Health and Wellbeing explicitly taught?

At Finlay, we take a comprehensive approach to the teaching of Personal, Social, Emotional and Health Education, also known as Relationships, Sex and Health Education. This is done through the thorough, consistent delivery of our 'Pink Curriculum', which is in line with the objectives set out by Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning Team. Pink Curriculum is split into the following categories:

Health and Wellbeing:

- Developing Risks
- Drugs and Medicine
- Understanding personal change and responsibility
- Personal feelings and differences
- Healthy living

Relationships:

- Healthy relationships and bullying
- Physical touch
- Kindness

Living in the Wider World:

- Online safety
- Media, news and current affairs
- Pocket money
- Community
- Citizenship

Pink Curriculum lessons are delivered once a week by our PPA Teachers (also the Subject Leaders for Pink Curriculum) and encourage the use of discussion, speaking and listening, and personal response to the subjects being discussed where appropriate.



2.2: Recovery Curriculum

As a result of Coronavirus, we recognise that children require more support with wellbeing due to the sense of loss that children may have experienced. As a result, we have implemented a 'Recovery Curriculum' which is in line with the research carried out by Barry Carpenter. "Recovery Curriculum" acknowledges that there have been big losses to children as they have stayed at home and that these losses can contribute to pupil's health with anxiety, trauma and bereavement playing a larger role. Children will perhaps have experienced these aspects all at once and in a sudden and unplanned fashion, which can leave children feeling vulnerable.

The recovery curriculum is based around 5 different levers: **Re-establishing values and group collaboration, Community, Transparent Curriculum, Metacognition and Space.**

2.2.1: How is this implemented at Finlay?

In school, classes have 'Recovery Curriculum' sessions three times a week, which are reactive and responsive to the needs of the children in the class. These sessions are evidenced and recorded in a Recovery Curriculum book. Similarly to Pink Curriculum, Recovery Curriculum develops the social skills of speaking, listening, turn-taking and sharing, with children encouraged to share their responses in a safe and secure space.

Lever 1: Re-establishing values and group collaboration:

This first lever is based on supporting children to rebuild relationships and re-learn how to interact and build relationships with others including sharing, turn-taking, greeting and interacting with others and responding to my familiar and new adults. This can include the following activities:

- Recipe for a healthy and happy class
- Class rules and expectations
- Giving children chance to adjust to each other and form new social groups – encourage play
- What is special about me?
- What is special about my friends?
- What is special about us as a class?
- Circle time games and discussions to encourage collaboration and communication – speaking and listening/showing respect.

Lever 2: Community

As part of our whole school vision and values, Community, and a sense of belonging, is something we really strive for and aim to incorporate to all that we do at Finlay. This lever involves supporting children to get to know a **new or changed space**, and **foster community spirit** within bubbles, across year group bubbles and across school. This can include the following:

- Explore how school has changed/is the same – develop new routines and understanding
- Getting to know my new classroom
- A day in our life – new routines (break, lunch, PE etc)
- Whole school challenges – attendance, stars etc.
- Assemblies on zoom so children can still interact and see one another
- Bubble challenges



- Collaborative artwork/displays

Lever 3 and 4: Transparent Curriculum and Metacognition

A transparent curriculum involves supporting children to enjoy and achieve in school, provide children with experiences that feel like the norm, and their normal routine (phonics, maths, daily maths, writing etc). This can also include the use of story time to create a love of reading, and theme based learning. We are also transparent with our parents too about how we plan to address gaps in learning through the use of intervention and Covid Catch up Clubs. Metacognition is a vital aspect of our curriculum, and something class teachers do naturally as part of their day-to-day practice. This includes teaching children how we learn, encouraging challenge, and highlighting that mistakes are how we learn and all part of the learning process.

Lever 5: Space

Space is something that is important at all times in school. As part of children and staff's mental health and wellbeing, space is an essential tool to aid reflection. Since returning to school, children have been encouraged children to reflect on their personal thoughts and experiences, reflect on the time they spent at home, the current situation and their return to school. This is done sensitively, taking into account personal factors for the children, however important as children know it is okay to reflect and open up about what has happened, as opposed to keeping things bottled up. Activities that can help with this are:

- Covid-19 time capsule
- Journals
- Question boxes in classrooms
- Let your worries go (balloons)
- Summary of my time away from school
- What am I thinking but not saying

2.3: Mental Health and Wellbeing – an individualised approach

At Finlay, we understand that it is essential to meet all children's needs, whether this is academically, socially or emotionally. We have a team of 3 learning mentors who support staff in school to support children's mental health and wellbeing in a number of different ways.

2.3.1: One-to-one sessions

If a child requires one-to-one Learning Mentor sessions, a referral can be made by any member of staff or requested by a parent. These sessions have to be agreed by the child's parent/carer before any work is done. Learning Mentors can support children with a range of different needs, including but not limited to:

- Bereavement/loss
- Self-esteem and confidence
- Resilience
- Friendships
- Anxiety/worries: both related to school and home
- Sleep
- Body image
- Parental separation



- Transition

Staff will complete a personalised, intensive block of work with the child and will review their pastoral targets at the end of this block of work, with the class teacher and parent/carer. If the child is no longer in need of this support, the case will be closed however the Learning Mentor team will still check in regularly with the child. If more support is needed, this will be given.

2.3.2: Group sessions

In the afternoons, some of the Learning Mentors lead group sessions. These are for a group of children who all need support with the same area, and the needs can be met collectively. These sessions are run using published materials where appropriate from Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning Team (GHLL) and ELSA. Group sessions include, but are not limited to:

- Resilience: Make me a Superhero (GHLL)
- Focused for Learning: Mindfulness (GHLL)
- Counting Sleep Project (GHLL)
- 5 Ways to Wellbeing (GHLL)
- Positive Playtimes
- Yoga for Emotional Health and Wellbeing (GHLL)
- Coronavirus Specific Interventions (GHLL): Worried about my health, low mood and feeling sad, social isolation and feeling lonely.
- Online Safety: Be an Internet Legend (Google)
- Body Image: Dove Self Esteem Project
- Media Smart Body Image (GHLL)
- Change 4 Life: Healthy eating and being active
- Friendship and Social Skills (ELSA)
- Emotional Literacy and Communication Intervention (ELSA): Superboy and Supergirl intervention
- Anxieties and worries group intervention and Master your Monsters: Anxiety in KS2 (ELSA)

Again, these sessions are run with the permission of parents/carers and the progress reviewed at the end of each block of work. On occasions, one-to-one sessions may be needed to respond to other needs.

2.3.3: Nurture

Every afternoon, a Nurture session is run by some of the Learning Mentors. A Boxall profile is completed by staff to identify children who require a space in Nurture. The Nurture program runs 4 x a week for a whole term, and then the impact is reviewed. The concept of nurture highlights the importance of social environments – who you're with, and not who you're born to – and its significant influence on social emotional skills, wellbeing and behaviour. Children and young people who have a good start in life are shown to have significant advantages over those who have experienced missing or distorted early attachments. They tend to do better at school, attend regularly, form more meaningful friendships and are significantly less likely to offend or experience physical or mental health problems. The nurturing approach offers a range of opportunities for children and young people to engage with missing early nurturing experiences, giving them the social and emotional skills to do well at school and with peers, develop their resilience and their capacity to deal more confidently with the trials and tribulations of life, for life. This targeted intervention is based around 'The Six Nurture Principles' which are:



1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
2. The classroom offers a safe base
3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing
4. Language is a vital means of communication
5. All behaviour is communication
6. The importance of transition in children's lives

2.4: Mental Health Champions

In school, we ensure that there are selected staff members who receive wellbeing training and therefore become our 'Mental Health Champion'.

2.5: Display

In school, there is a Mental Health and Wellbeing display for both children and adults. The children's display includes ways to support their own wellbeing, as well as photographs of what they have been up to in school related to wellbeing. The staff wellbeing board is in the staff room and follows a 'You said, We did' approach.

2.6: A Multi-Agency Approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing

At Finlay, we believe a multi-agency approach to working is important. Through this approach, Team around the Child meetings, Team around the Family, Team around the Locality Cluster meetings and other core groups, we can identify need and support those identified.

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 Mental Health and Wellbeing policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children, including as a result of social media/online use
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in Pink Curriculum 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



- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Therapists
- Teens in Crisis
- Early Help

3. Implementation: Staff

Staff's wellbeing is an integral part of our school ethos, and something that is at the forefront of everybody's mind. We believe staff wellbeing should be embedded into daily practice, as opposed to 'one off, tokenistic' gestures. We support staff wellbeing by:

- Discussing wellbeing with staff during triangulation meetings.
- Allowing staff to take their PPA at home.
- Enabling staff to request special leave in regards to childcare etc: allowing staff to attend Nativities, Sports Day, special assemblies etc where possible.
- Employing full time teaching assistants to work in every class. These are employed until 4.30pm, and help teachers with marking and lesson preparation.
- Supporting staff with the planning and delivery of lessons where required.
- Support agencies shared with staff, displayed in the staffrooms and the staff toilets to offer anonymous advice.

Add to this section – how else do we ensure staff's wellbeing?

4. Impact

The impact of targeted and integrated mental health and wellbeing in school should be evident through the staff and children at Finlay. Children will feel happy to come to school, and feel that school provides them with a safe, secure space to express their feelings. We will monitor incidents linked to mental health and wellbeing through learning mentor referrals and incidents logged on CPOMS. These will be reviewed regularly and shared with Governors in our whole-school report. Staff will feel supported at work, and able to manage their work-load effectively, and ask for advice and support as required. Staff wellbeing will be a regular topic of conversation, and discussed openly, frequently.