



# Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

**Date Prepared:** September 2023

**Date Approved by Governing Body:**

**Date to be reviewed:** September 2024

This policy was written in consultation with staff, pupils, parents and professionals involved in mental health and wellbeing.

### **1.0 Policy Statement**

At Gilmour Primary School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff.

We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued.

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing:

*“ 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”.*

At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

### **2.0 Aims at Gilmour in relation to mental health and emotional wellbeing**

At Gilmour we:

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
- help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- help children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count.
- encourage children to be confident and 'dare to be different'
- help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks.
- enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in students and adults.

- enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- provide the right support to students with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- ensure staff are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing;

We promote a mentally healthy environment for pupils and staff through:

- promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
- promoting pupil and staff 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 their needs

We pursue our aims through:

- universal, whole school approaches to meet the needs of all our pupils.
- addition support for pupils who may have short term needs and those who may have been made vulnerable by life experiences such as bereavement.
- specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or longterm difficulties including attachment disorder.

### **3.0 Scope**

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining our whole school approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Medical policy and our SEND policy in cases where pupils mental health needs overlap with these. Children with mental health and wellbeing needs will only be added to the SEND register if they have been diagnosed by a mental health professional. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for Behaviour and Anti-bullying, and PSHE. It should also sit alongside child protection procedures.

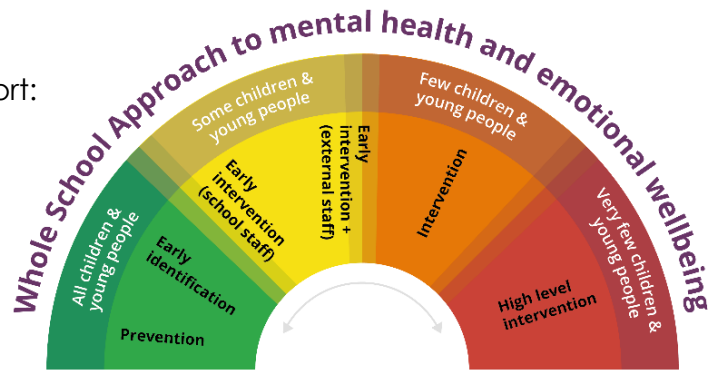
### **4.0 Lead Members of Staff**

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

- Chris McDonald- Designated child protection / safeguarding officer
- Joanne Duffy- Designated child protection / safeguarding officer
- David Kirby- Designated child protection / safeguarding officer
- Ruth Frain – Safeguarding Officer/SENDCo
- Ruth Turner– Designated child protection / safeguarding officer and Mental Health and Emotional wellbeing lead
- Daniel Snowdon - Designated child protection / safeguarding officer and MentalHealth and Emotional wellbeing lead

### 5.0 Targeted support

At Gilmour, there are 4 levels of support:



#### 5.1 Green = Prevention and early identification.

This level is for all children and provides the skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum (Jigsaw).

#### 5.2 Yellow = Early Intervention.

At this level of need children/young people will be showing early signs of distress that may be the start of an emerging mental health issue. Short-term interventions that build coping strategies are given to prevent these issues from developing – small changes to prevent bigger challenges.

This may include:

- Circle time approaches or ‘circle of friends’ activities.
- Targeted use of Jigsaw resources.
- Managing feelings resources e.g. ‘worry boxes’ and ‘worry eaters’

- Managing emotions resources such as ‘the incredible 5-point scale’
- Primary Group Work/Mental health and wellbeing groups
- Therapeutic activities including art, lego and relaxation and mindfulness
- Forest of feelings
- Starving the Anger gremlin
- Starving the Anxiety Gremlin
- Support from outside agencies, such as A Quiet Place or The Mental Health Team

### **5.3 Orange = Intervention.**

At this level children and young people will need more specific support as their mental health problem will be more developed and significantly impacting their day-to-day life. There may also be other complexities such as trauma or neurodevelopmental conditions. Interventions are chosen to suit the needs of each child/young person.

### **5.4 Red = High Level Intervention.**

At this level children and young people will need high-level support for mental health conditions that require support from Alder Hey Fresh CAMHS. Children may be at crisis point, require medication, or several different types of specialist support.

### **5.5 Monitoring**

The school will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate including:

- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire
- PIVATS PSED
- The Boxall Profile
- Emotional literacy scales

### **6.0 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.

Within the school (noticeboards, common rooms, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites, parent app), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

### **7.0 Identifying needs and Warning Signs**

All staff will complete termly wellbeing trackers on their pupils aimed at identifying a range of possible difficulties including:

- attendance
- punctuality
- relationships
- approach to learning
- physical indicators
- negative behaviour patterns
- family circumstances
- recent bereavement
- health indicators

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which indicate a student 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 designated child protection and safeguarding officer or the emotional wellbeing lead as appropriate.

Possible warning signs include:

- changes in eating / sleeping habits
- becoming socially withdrawn
- changes in activity and mood
- talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- an increase in lateness or absenteeism
- techniques.

## **8.0 Working with Parents**

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

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 and school newsletter
- ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go 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 PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

### **9.0 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
- Behaviour support through LA assessment services at Hope School and New Heights PEC
- Paediatricians
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Therapists
- CAMHS
- Seedlings
- A Quiet Place

### **10.0 Training**

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

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 to developing situations with one or more pupils.

### **11.0 Staff Mental Health**

We recognise that anyone can experience mental health issues for various reasons which may be out of their control. There may also be work related factors that could contribute to poor mental health such as work life imbalance, work load pressure, poor working conditions. To every extent possible, we aim to recognise and address cases of workplace

pressures that contribute to mental health issues.

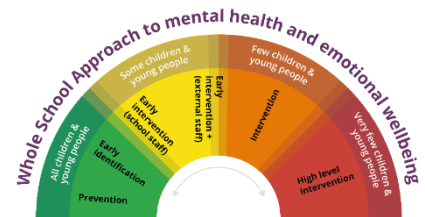
We aim to:

- treat staff mental illness seriously.
- proactively support resolution of issues causing concern.
- support staff members who face mental health problems.
- create a positive and pleasant working environment
- ensure all staff feeling involved when decision making about school
- have an open door policy where staff feel they can go and talk to senior leaders
- limited emails to working hours of 8am-6pm and not on weekends or in holidays
- help all staff in our school feel like they belong and are an important part of our community.



## Appendix

### Wave 2 Support Interventions run by school



### Bereavement support

Bereavement support is tailored to the individual and the situation. In general, it is 1:1 support that focuses on normalising grief and supporting the children through the process. Children are given time to reflect on the person who died and create positive memories.

Who might benefit?

- Children who have suffered a bereavement
- Children who have suffered a loss including parental separation

### Circle of Friends

Play based sessions focusing on understanding conflict, how to cooperate and develop self-esteem. Children work with up to three peers in an adult led session. They learn skills of cooperation, empathy, listening and self-expression. They will understand how to win and lose games and the importance of joining in.

Who might benefit?

- Children with difficulties with pro-social behaviour
- Children who struggle to interact positively with others
- Children who struggle to share or take turns
- Children who struggle to regulate their emotions
- Children with social anxiety
- Children with school avoidance
- Children with attachment disorders and social isolation

### DESTY Island

An online platform aimed at helping children develop their self-confidence, social skills and emotional resilience. Empowering them to discover their strengths in the face of challenges and uncertainty. This is a 1:1 intervention which children go through with a trained mentor. They explore different emotions, complete online activities and a workbook.

Who might benefit?

- Children with low self-esteem and resilience
- Children with mental health difficulties e.g. anxiety disorders; social adjustment difficulties; childhood abuse/neglect/trauma; attachment disorders and social isolation

### **Emotional Regulation Plan**

A personalised plan that is developed 1:1 with the child. It focuses on: identifies triggers, naming the emotions, recognising how they present in our body and strategies to help the child regulate their emotion.

Who might benefit?

- Children with general anxiety
- Children who are struggling to manage their emotions
- Children with attachment disorders

### **Forest of Feelings**

Small group intervention which helps children develop emotional awareness and how to react to different feelings. Each session, the children follow a story that is centred around a specific emotion. They complete circle time and creative activities to help them think about the experiences and feelings of the character and then apply them to their own experiences. Its aim it to normalise feelings and help children discuss their own emotions so they are better equipped to deal with them in health ways.

Who might benefit?

- Children who struggle to self-regulate their emotions.
- Children who struggle to communicate their emotions.
- Children with mental health difficulties e.g. anxiety disorders; social adjustment difficulties; childhood abuse/neglect/trauma; attachment disorders and social isolation

### **Heart Math**

Heart Math is an online programme that supports self-regulation and general wellbeing. Children are attached to a pulse monitor and work through games that encourage them to control their breathing to change/calm their pulse.

Children access it as part of their daily support, before an event that may lead to heightened anxiety, or after an event to help them self-regulate their emotions.

Who might benefit?

- Children who struggle to regulate their emotions
- Children with ASD
- Children struggling with stress
- Children with mental health difficulties e.g. anxiety disorders; social adjustment difficulties; childhood abuse/neglect/trauma; attachment disorders and social isolation

### **Lego Therapy**

Lego therapy is a structured therapeutic tool designed to help children who experience social, communication or developmental difficulties to learn, to develop and practice social, communicative and self-monitoring skills.

In its purest form, an adult will oversee a small group of children who work collaboratively in different roles in order to assemble a Lego construction. Whilst the facilitator is to coach the children to develop and use social, communicative and interpersonal skills to get the project completed; the development of these skills is of course, the overall aim. The child develops cooperation skills and the ability to understand how to react when things go wrong. They build self-esteem and a sense of purpose.

Who might benefit?

- Children with Mental Health or Social Learning Difficulties - e.g. anxiety disorders; social adjustment difficulties; childhood abuse/neglect/trauma; attachment disorders; social isolation; physical & sensory disabilities.
- Children with difficulties with emotional regulation, pro-social behaviour, taking direction from adults and other associated difficulties similar to those with ASC
- Children who are usually resistant to engaging in group interventions.

### **Sensory Circuits**

Sensory circuits are a sequence of physical activities that are either alerting, organising or calming.

The aim of them is to facilitate sensory processing in order to ensure that the sensory system is running correctly to then be able to do activities in the classroom (or whatever is coming up next in a day). Sensory circuits should be physical, active and fun. They can be a useful way to provide some sensory stimulus through physical activity to a child who may be seeking sensory input.

Who might benefit?

Children or young people may have a diagnosis like SPD (sensory processing disorder)

Children presenting with behaviours which could indicate sensory difficulties:

- fidgeting
- not like to be touched
- a child who does/doesn't like the cold
- poor coordination and balance
- rocking e.g. back and forth or side to side
- difficulty paying attention
- difficulty organising themselves

### **Starving the Anger Gremlin and Starving the Anxiety Gremlin**

Starving the Anger/Anxiety Gremlin (STAG) is a cognitive behaviour therapy approach. This looks at the relationship between our thoughts (cognition) our feelings (emotions) and our actions (behaviours) with a specific focus on either anger or anxiety.

Children complete 6 sessions which involve: naming the emotion (anger or anxiety) how it appears in their body; the effect it has and how to and not to deal with it.

Throughout the sessions they think about negative thoughts and behaviours and how they are linked to problems they are facing. They are challenged to implement alternative thoughts and behaviours to overcome problems, manage emotions and improve wellbeing. Therefore, they can change how they view themselves and how they interact with others.

The programme can be 1:1 or in a small group led by an adult.

Who might benefit?

- Children who struggle to regulate their emotions (specifically anger and anxiety)
- Children with social phobia
- Children with school avoidance
- Children with general anxiety
- Children with OCD behaviour

### **Online Support and Intervention (OSI) for Child Anxiety**

Online Support and Intervention for Child Anxiety (OSI) is an online programme for parents to help them support their child.

The treatment is based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) principles, which work on the premise that the way we think, feel, and behave are interlinked. Therefore, by targeting the way an individual thinks about a situation and how they behave, this can, in turn, change the way they feel about a situation.

This is a parent-led treatment. The aim of the programme is to empower parents with tools and techniques to help their child to overcome their problems with anxiety. This is achieved by helping their child to put their fears to the test so that children can learn new information about their fears

and their ability to cope in feared situations. Parents are considered to be the experts about their child and are seen as fundamental agents of change in this treatment.

Who might benefit?

- Children with general anxiety
- Parents who are open to support

### Wave 2 Support Interventions run by outside agency's

#### **A Quiet Place (AQP)**

1:1 sessions with a trained practitioner looking at specific area of need for understanding experiences and emotions. Children recognise their experiences can cause different feelings. They practice strategies to regulate themselves and support to develop resilience, self-awareness and readiness for learning.

Who might benefit?

- Children who are struggling to regulate their emotions
- Children with poor self-esteem and resilience's

#### **Educational Mental Health Practitioners (EMHP)**

1:1 or group sessions (REACT) that use a therapeutic CBT approach to explore a range of low level mental health issues.

#### **Seedlings**

Qualified therapists provide a range of support that is age-appropriate and tailored to what each child needs. This includes both 1:1 sessions and group work that can use a range of techniques including:

- Talking therapies
- Arts therapies
- Support and advice for families
- Providing education and resources to help staff deal with difficult emotional issues

**Who might benefit?**

- Children who have a higher level of mental health concerns that can't be met by the schools interventions