



CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

School values – Ambition, Resilience, Communication and Self Worth

Today we create, tomorrow we achieve, forever we learn

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Children's mental health is a growing concern for the whole nation as children today face different pressures, stresses and risks. Particularly post the Covid pandemic where children experienced significant disruption to learning and social experiences, illness and bereavement. The Children's Society (<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk>) report that one in six 5-19 year olds are likely to have at least one mental health difficulty. Anxiety, depressive and bipolar disorders in children are increasing and it is thought that 50% of mental health difficulties start by the age of 14. It is likely that 5 children in a class of 30 will have a mental health problem related to difficulties during lockdown.

Mental Well-being describes your mental state – how well you are feeling and how well you cope with day-to-day life. Our mental well-being can change from day-to-day, month-to-month or year-to-year. If you have good mental well-being (or good mental health) you can:

- Feel relatively confident in yourself – you value and accept yourself and judge yourself on realistic and reasonable standards
- Feel and express a range of emotions
- Feel engaged with the world around you – you can build and maintain positive relationships with other people and feel you contribute to the community you live in
- Live and work productively
- Cope with the stresses of daily life and manage times of change and uncertainty

Taken from the www.mind.org.uk website 2020

What do the government say?

Using the DfE's guidance, Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools, as a guide for good practice in schools, we work to the following ideals:

Prevention: creating a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely, improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school, and teaching children to be resilient so that they can manage the normal stress of life effectively. This will include teaching pupils about mental wellbeing through the curriculum and reinforcing this teaching through school activities and ethos.

Identification: recognising emerging issues as early and accurately as possible, talking these through with children and families, and making plans to support.

Early support: helping pupils to access early support and interventions which are proven to help children struggling with mental health difficulties and a lower sense of well-being.

Access to specialist support: working effectively with other agencies to provide quick access or referrals to specialist support. This may take time but school also has access to Cluster support and in school specialist provision.

Mental Health and Wellbeing at Meadowfield

At Meadowfield, we are committed to promoting good mental health for our pupils and staff. Mrs Middleton, Mrs Elsom, Miss Dickson and Mrs Deary are spending some of their time working as pastoral support workers, helping pupils with social and emotional well-being needs.

Our school values of communication, self-worth, ambition and resilience, offer time in the curriculum to discuss any worries and concerns. Daily check-ins with pupils allow for any worries to be addressed quickly so that support can be targeted and early intervention put in place.

Mrs Stout, the Headteacher is Mental Health First Aid trained, completing this certificate in 2019. Mrs Middleton, Lead Learning Mentor also holds this qualification as does Mr Moore, one of our school Governors and Mrs Mason, staff governor and HLTA. Miss Dickson, our deputy DSL, is also MHFA trained for adults and children.

Mrs Almond, the school SENCo and AHT, leads on restorative practice, de-escalation and behaviour in school and supports teachers and SLT in organising interventions to support children who have been identified as needing extra support.

Mrs Dalziel is the school champion for One Life, Mindmate and PSHE. The Mindmate sessions and support centres around 6 lessons each year for all year groups around key themes linked to good mental health and well-being. One Life is a whole school strategy developing physical, social and emotional wellbeing underpinned by a robust morning routine and clear lessons and assemblies.

Underpinned by our school values we are committed to:

- An open-door policy for children and parents to raise problems to staff – you can find the leadership team and other adults on the playground before and after school, teachers are available at the 'pod' doors and we are always available on the phone, email or social media if you would prefer
- A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health and a preventative curriculum utilising the One Life approach; in addition, every class will take part in one Mindmate Lesson per half term (6 a year) and have constant support to talk about worries, concerns or difficulties that they face
- Designated members of staff have regular supervision to support their mental health and well-being, while also quality assuring the support in place for the pupils that they are working with. This extends to group supervision for SNAs and EY practitioners.
- Positive classroom management and clear policies on behaviour including bullying – the school de-escalation policy outlines the language that is used to support all children and adults during and after a distressing period.

- A commitment to Restorative Practice and approach all conflict with a view to mending relationships that have been damaged in some way
- All pupils and staff feeling a sense of belonging – celebrating achievements, having joint rewards through the school house points dojo system and celebration assemblies
- A committed senior leadership team including a governor that sets a culture that values mental health and wellbeing
- Dedicated Mental Health First Aiders in school to assist staff in identifying and helping pupils with mental health needs
- Continuous professional development for staff in matters of mental health and wellbeing; support is available in school and signposting to other agencies is also possible. We are being mindful of work-life balance and pinch points throughout the year and avoid unnecessary assessment and admin tasks.
- Establishing connections within and across school and groups of schools
- Identifying Mental Health and Wellbeing in our school development plan
- A commitment to work closely with parents/carers about mental health in children

Useful Websites

www.childrenssociety.org.uk

www.educationsupport.org.uk

<https://mindmatechampions.org.uk>

Our Whole School Approach

Leadership & Management - prioritise mental health wherever possible, for example, inclusion in the school development plan, ensuring curriculum time, assemblies and extra-curriculum time are dedicated to mental health education. We promote positive relationships between staff, pupils and parents/carers in our behaviour and conduct policies. The Governing Body have wellbeing as a standing agenda item alongside safeguarding.

Ethos & Environment - our school vision and values promote respect, diversity and inclusion in the daily life of the school. Every morning, each class has toast which allows staff to spend time chatting to pupils as they arrive, giving them a warm welcome and assessing their wellbeing. Each class has worry boxes and areas for reflection time in a quiet space away from the main seating. Our physical environment has been made to be homely and relaxing – large scale art, soft furnishings, plants and open, airy classrooms. At lunchtime, we have different activities to help support pupils in choosing play that best suit their needs and are supported by the ACE team for happy, healthy playtimes. Adults are on hand to listen to any concerns, if there are any. Our school has an inclusion Mentor who

acts as a leader for happy, healthy play and lunchtimes as we recognise that social times can be challenging for pupils who are less confident or anxious about peer relationships.

Staff Development - senior leaders are active in providing ongoing professional development for all staff about mental health and wellbeing. All staff have accessed basic mental health and well-being training with a group of 6 staff having additional coaching in this area. We provide nurturing environments which support children with a range of mental health and well-being needs and we share this good practice across school and our cluster.

Curriculum, Teaching & Learning - Mental Health and Wellbeing is part of our PSHE curriculum taught through the One Life approach whole school. Through this the children access the Mindmate Lessons and have mindfulness sessions to reduce calm and to help train them to relax both in and out of school. All adults have had in-depth training on Restorative Practice and building positive relationships and this is reflected in both the teaching and learning policy and positive behaviour policy

Pupil Voice and influence- pupils' opinions are regularly sought through the school council and pupil questionnaires throughout the year. Class conferences with teacher also feed into this voice and is used to influence the school improvement plan.

Identifying Need and Monitoring Impact – our internal referral system help adults in school identify difficulties that children are experiencing and this is then discussed as a group of specialists. We use the Boxall Profile to help identify best approaches to meet needs and monitor the impact of intervention and support. Our attendance figures and CPOMS help us track the positive impact of our work with pupils.

Working with Parents/Carers - our pastoral team and all adults in school work hard to build supportive relationships with families where the emphasis is on working together to improve wellbeing. This may include regular phone chats, meeting in school for a coffee and a chat, supporting families in meetings with services and being available before and after school to chat. Facebook and other social media is particularly successful in passing on information and receiving feedback from all stakeholders.

Targeted Support - our pastoral team and adults in school can provide packages of support for pupils i.e. a series of sessions over several weeks to address wellbeing needs such as anxiety, low self-esteem and friendship skills. For pupils with more specialist needs, we can refer families to local services and support groups. For longer term support for developing self-esteem and well-being we may refer a child for a placement in LEAP, this support can be in place for up to four school terms. We also work closely with our Cluster team who have emotional well-being workers and access to wider targeted support. More recently we have also used the LUFC KICKS mentor programme to support children with social, emotional and mental health needs.

Other information

At Meadowfield we recognise that school staff cannot act as mental health experts and we do not try to diagnose conditions. However, we do ensure that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate concerns and clear referral and accountability systems. We endeavour to create a safe and calm educational environment and strengthen resilience before serious mental

health problems occur. Young Minds is the UK's leading charity committed to improving the emotional well-being and mental health of children and young people. To find out more information you can visit their website and for a parent phone line you can call for free advice.

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

[Home](#)- Meadowfield Primary School website